بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيم

مرشد إلى تزكية النفس (مختصر)

A Guide to the Purification of the Soul (Abridgment)

Collection from the Works of Great Scholars and Revivalists
Featuring Works of:
Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya
Abu Hamid al-Ghazali
Syed Abul Ala Moududi
Khurram Murad

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Syed Aijaz Ahmed

Preface

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضْلِلْ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ .وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

Indeed, all praise is for Allah.
We praise Him, seek His help, and ask His forgiveness.
We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our own souls and from the consequences of our misdeeds.
Whomever Allah guides, none can mislead; and whomever He allows to go astray, none can guide.
I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Indeed, one of the greatest missions for which the Prophet of this Ummah, **Muhammad** ﷺ, was sent is the **purification of the soul**. Allah Most High declares:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

“It is He Who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the wisdom—though before that they were in manifest error.”
(Sūrah al-Jumuʿah 62:2)

Purification (*tazkiyah*) is a lifelong, comprehensive process—an inner journey that demands sincerity, discipline, and continuous striving. We ask Allah ﷻ to grant us strength, steadfastness, and perseverance in pursuing this noble objective. **امین.**

This compilation has been prepared from **multiple authentic sources**, drawing upon the wisdom of some of the greatest scholars and revivalists (*mujaddidīn*) of our tradition. The works of **Imām al-Ghazālī**, **Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah**, **Mawlānā Abul Aʿlā Maudūdī**,

and **Ustadh Khurram Murad** form the foundation of this endeavour. Their insights into the human heart, the nature of the soul, and the path of spiritual refinement have been carefully arranged into **four structured chapters**, each addressing an essential dimension of *tazkiyah*.

Chapter One

Based on the writings of **Ustadh Khurram Murad**, this chapter introduces the **process of self-development**, the meaning and importance of *tazkiyah*, the remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), and the methods of both individual and collective spiritual action. It also explores the love of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ as the driving force behind true transformation.

Chapter Two

Drawn from **Imām al-Ghazālī's Ihyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn**, this chapter covers the celebrated section **Sharḥ ʿAjā'ib al-Qalb**—an exploration of the wonders of the heart. It discusses the relationship between the **qalb**, **nafs**, **rūḥ**, and their attributes, explaining how spiritual life begins and ends with the purification and illumination of the heart.

Chapter Three

An abridged selection from **Ibn al-Qayyim's Madārij al-Sālikīn**, as presented by the Osoul Center publication. Here, I have selected only the following three stages the stage focuses on three foundational spiritual stations:

- **The Stage of Repentance (Tawbah)** – returning to Allah as commanded in Qur'an

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"Believers, turn all of you to Allah in repentance, so that you may achieve success."*(24:31)*

- **The Stage of Devotion (Inābah)** – turning wholeheartedly to Allah, described in Quran

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنْصَرُونَ

Turn *wholeheartedly* to your Lord and submit yourselves to Him before the punishment comes upon you, and then you will not be helped (39:54)

- **The Stage of Taking Heed (I‘tibār / Muraqabah)** – cultivating awareness, vigilance, and humility
  These stages together outline the journey of the seeker who wishes to walk sincerely towards Allah.

Chapter Four

Based on **Mawlānā Maudūdī’s *Guidelines for Islamic Workers***, this chapter addresses practical aspects of spiritual life and Islamic activism. It explains the meaning of **Ta‘alluq Billah** (deep attachment to Allah), warns against arrogance and spiritual diseases, and emphasizes maintaining strong relationships with family while balancing responsibilities of dīn and worldly duties.

This humble effort has been specially compiled for our **HRD members** with the hope that it becomes a source of personal growth, spiritual awakening, and practical guidance. We sincerely request all members, mentors, and participants to study these chapters with care, derive action points, and strive to implement them in their daily lives.

May Allah ﷻ accept this work, bless all the authors and institutions whose efforts contributed to it, and grant us all immense reward (*ajr ‘azīm*) in His path.

We ask Allah (ﷻ), the Almighty, to purify our hearts and souls.
To Allah (ﷻ) belongs all praise, and to Him (ﷻ) belongs all power.
He (ﷻ) is our Lord, and every path ultimately leads back to Him (ﷻ).

آمین یارب العالمین .

Syed Aijaz Ahmed

Chapter 1

— Beginning the Journey

This chapter explains that spiritual development begins when a person **consciously decides** to turn to Allah. The journey requires sincerity, humility, and recognition of one's need for Allah. A believer must awaken from heedlessness and realize that life is purposeful. True progress begins when one makes a firm intention to live by faith, discipline, and remembrance.

Key ideas:

- The journey starts with **awareness and intention**.
- One must decide to change and grow spiritually.
- Guidance is from Allah, but effort is from the seeker.

— Tazkiyah: Purification of the Soul

Khurram Murad RA describes **tazkiyah** as cleansing the heart from spiritual diseases and nurturing good character. Purification involves avoiding sins, resisting low desires, and constantly improving one's relationship with Allah. A purified soul becomes calm, sincere, and connected to divine guidance.

- Tazkiyah means **purification and growth**.
- Removing arrogance, envy, hypocrisy is essential.
- Virtues like sincerity, patience, and humility must be cultivated.

— The Responsible Self

This chapter teaches that spiritual progress depends on **taking responsibility**. Each person is accountable for their actions, choices, and intentions. One cannot blame society, circumstances, or other people for spiritual weaknesses. You choose your path, you train your soul, and you answer to Allah.

Key points :

- You are responsible for your spiritual state.
- The self must be disciplined, not followed blindly.
- Honest self-examination leads to growth.

— The Heart and Its Treatment

Murad explains that the heart is the center of faith. When the heart is corrupted by sins like pride, jealousy, or heedlessness, the entire person becomes spiritually weak. The heart can be treated through remembrance of Allah, Qur'an, dua, repentance, and keeping good company.

Key points :

- The heart controls character and actions.
- Spiritual diseases block guidance.
- Treatment involves dhikr, Qur'an, repentance, and righteous deeds.

— The States of the Heart

This chapter outlines the three conditions of the heart: **alive**, **sick**, and **dead**.

- The **alive heart** is filled with faith, humility, and closeness to Allah.
- The **sick heart** struggles between truth and desires.
- The **dead heart** is dominated by worldly pleasures and unresponsive to reminders. The goal is to nurture an alive heart through consistency and remembrance.

Key points :

- Hearts differ in their closeness to Allah.
- A living heart responds to guidance; a sick heart requires healing; a dead heart has turned away.
- Constant remembrance and self-discipline keep the heart alive.

Let's Awaken, purify yourself, take responsibility, heal your heart, and keep it alive with faith.

اللَّهُمَّ يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

Leicester, October 1999

CHAPTER ONE: The Process of Self Development

THE path to God is only illuminated when a person recognises the central place of God in his life and strives to develop his self accordingly. The Messenger of God said:

If someone wants to know what position he enjoys in the eyes of God, he has only to look at what place he gives to God (in his heart and life. (*Hakim*)

The term nearest in meaning to self development in the Quranic vocabulary is *tazkiya*. *Tazkiya* means purification and refers to the cleansing of the human self from all that is unwholesome, undesirable and unwelcome. It also refers to the nurturing and strengthening of all the qualities

within the human self that are essential for growth and development, for blossoming and flowering.

THE GOAL IN LIFE

Success and happiness in this world and the Hereafter depend on *tazkiya*, the purification and nurturing of our personality. The Quran states that true success is only reserved for those who seek to purify themselves:

Successful indeed is the one who purifies his whole self [ash-Shams 91:9]

Our personality comprises not only the physical body but also the mind and the heart, feelings and attitudes, character and behaviour. Proper nurturing and development of these elements of the personality will achieve desirable goals. When goals are desirable, the process of aspiring to, working towards and achieving them also become desirable. This is part of human nature. It is critical, therefore, that we recognise and understand the true nature of our ultimate goal in life.

For the Believer, the most coveted goal in life is to seek the good pleasure of Allah and Janna or Paradise. Our Creator has set this goal for us: *And surely Paradise - it is the goal* [an-Naziat 79: 41]; *Indeed the Next abode - it is truly the life!* [al-Ankabut 29: 64]; *The companions of Paradise - they are the triumphant ones* [al-Hashr 59: 20].

Know, however, that attaining the pleasure of Allah takes precedence over seeking Janna but the two are closely connected. Paradise can only be attained through seeking Allah's pleasure, and when Allah's pleasure is gained, we will indeed be granted Paradise. Reflect upon the following two verses in the Quran:

And there is a kind of person who would willingly give up personal interests, seeking Allah's pleasure; and God is Most Compassionate towards His servants.[al-Baqara 2: 207.]

Indeed Allah has purchased from the Believers their lives and their possessions, promising them Paradise, in return. [at-Tawba 9: 111.]

The alternative to attaining Paradise in the Hereafter is to be placed in *Jahannam* or Hellfire and to receive its punishments. The Quran states: *But in the life to come*: [it is either] *severe suffering, or God's forgiveness and His goodly acceptance*. [al-Hadid 57: 20.] What is it that makes a person deserving of such a suffering? The answer is to be found in the second part of the same verse: *for the life of this world is nothing but an enjoyment of self-delusion* [al-Hadid 57: 20.] *Jahannam* therefore, is for those who seek as their ultimate goal in life, not the pleasure of Allah or Paradise, but the enjoyment of worldly gains.

The pursuit of worldly gain is but a mirage. All worldly gains are left behind when you die. All that is on earth is bound to perish while Allah and His good favour will remain forever. It is for this reason that the Queen advises:

Vie with one another in seeking to attain to your Sustainer's forgiveness; and to a Paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, which has been readied for those who have attained to faith in God and His messengers: such is the bounty of Allah which He grants unto whomever He wills -for Allah is limitless in His great bounty. [al-Hadid 57: 21.]

All your efforts in this world should therefore be focused only on seeking Paradise. It is the Promise

of the Almighty that:

You will only be rewarded fully for all your good deeds on the Day of Resurrection, and [on that Day] *whoever will be drawn away from Hellfire, and admitted into Paradise, will indeed have triumphed* [Ali Imran 3:185.]

THE FIRST STEP TO PARADISE

The first step in self development, then, is to concentrate single-mindedly on Paradise. Indeed, the one who is unsure of his destiny in life, torn between this world and the Next, like one standing with his feet in two separate boats - will be thrown off balance. Many of the difficulties that we face are due to this lack of commitment and inability to focus on the real and ultimate goal. If you can keep your focus on Janna, then everything else will be possible.

The selection of the ultimate goal of Paradise must be made consciously and may involve an absolute break with the past. To choose this new goal as the ultimate goal in one's life is in fact to choose a new life, to begin a new journey. Embark on this new journey by refreshing your *wudu* (ablution) and offering two *rakas* (units) of *Salat* or Prayer reminding yourself of all the punishment of Hellfire you have just resolved to avoid at all costs and all the rewards of Paradise that you will strive to achieve. Remind yourself also of the important stations and landmarks on the journey; imagine death as near; imagine the moment when the Angel of Death will declare, `your time is over, now you must follow me'; imagine that moment when you will be made to stand in the presence of Allah, Most High, so that the final judgment of life may be passed on you and imagine the consequences of that judgment. When you have completed the two *rakas* then resolve once more that all efforts will be directed towards achieving Paradise, beseech Allah and pray with humility:

O Allah, I ask for Your mercy and whatever brings me closer to it, in word and deed.

O Allah, I ask for a faith that will never vanish, a blessing that will never diminish, a pleasure that will never abate, and the most elevated position in Paradise distinguished by the companionship of Your Messenger, Muhammad.

While improvement in your habits and actions is a life-long process, the desire to achieve it can thus be sparked in a moment. This desire will provide the momentum for attaining your goal - the good pleasure of Allah and Paradise.

YOUR MISSION

Having taken the fast step and resolved to attain Paradise, you may ask yourself, what does Allah require from me in order for me to succeed?

What Allah requires of you, in Quranic vocabulary, is for you to be a *mumin* and *mujahid*. *A mumin* is one who is true and firm in his faith in God. A *mujahid* is one who strives his utmost, with all the means at his disposal, to gain God's pleasure. If you are a *mumin* and a *mujahid,* Allah, the Most Exalted in Power and yet the Most Compassionate, will assist you to rise to higher stations both in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah has promised this to those who possess the qualities of *iman* or faith and the active resolve for jihad or struggle. The Quran states:

The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Apostle then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah; they are the truthful ones. [al-Hujurat 49:15]

You now have a mission: to become a *mumin* and *mujahid*. As you embark upon this mission you may come to feel that your knowledge of Islam is somewhat limited or perhaps that you are unable to attain those heights of submission and purification that you desire or others expect of you. This is only natural. You must not, however, allow these feelings of personal shortcomings to undermine your efforts to practise Islam. Remember that Islam is a state of becoming not a state of being. Each day you must strive to improve and better yourself - and you will improve.

Tazkiya or this new programme for self-improvement that you now find yourself in, is a process that unfolds itself step by step. You cannot expect to change all at once. This is against the laws of nature. The Prophet was always aware of this when he was dealing with his Companions. Whenever someone embraced Islam, the Prophet would not ask that person to do everything immediately. Instead, he would teach and expect that person to start fulfilling his obligations only as much as he could bear at a time. This gradual process of change is also clearly reflected in the manner in which the Quran was revealed over a period of 23 years. In all your efforts towards becoming a better Believer, you must bear in mind this principle of gradualism, otherwise you may try to attain the impossible, and when you do not achieve it, you may become frustrated.

At this stage, what matters most is that your bargain with Allah, *iman,* remains sound and firm. This definition of *iman* is perhaps a little different from the definition you usually hear. It is, however, a definition that we find in the Quran [at-Tawba 9: 111]. Furthermore, attainment of such *iman,* allows you to be counted among the true and sincere servants in the eyes of your Lord. The Quran states:

Behold, God has bought of the Believers their lives and their possessions, promising them Paradise in return, they fight in God's cause, and slay, and are slain: a promise which in truth He has willed upon Himself in the Tawra, and the Injil, and the Quran. And who could be more faithful to his covenant than God? [at-Tawba 9: 111]

Once you have committed yourself to Allah, all that you have must be spent in His way. This is the ideal. Ideals, however, are always difficult to achieve - and this you must understand and accept. Ideals are always to be pursued; if they are easily and always achievable, they can hardly remain as ideals. Keeping to your side of the bargain then, is an ideal that you must always seek to maintain. It is this seeking and this striving to spend all that we have in the way of Allah that is known as jihad

and alternatively, in this instance, as *tazkiya.*

PREREQUISITES OF TAZKIYA

As you proceed on your journey along the new path, in quest of the ultimate goal of Paradise, you will encounter difficulties and hardships. These may often seem insurmountable. Overcoming them may be made easier by a good early grasp of the prerequisites of *tazkiya.* These are as follows:

1. Tazkiya - *Your Personal Responsibility*

You must accept that *tazkiya* is a highly personal process and that it demands taking personal responsibility for carrying it forward. You can only see the results of *tazkiya* through your own realisation, your own personal efforts and your own exertions. No one else can perform *tazkiya* for you. No organisation, no leader and no teacher can replace your own responsibility. God says: *And no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another's burden; and if one weighed down by his load calls upon [another] to help bear carry it nothing thereof may be carried [by that other], even if it be one's near of kin.* [al-Fatir;5:18] This sense of personal responsibility is basic to the whole purpose and approach of Islam. Ultimately, we are judged individually for discharging our own responsibilities. If someone else fulfils your obligations, then it should be he that is rewarded, not you. To be rewarded you must do what is expected of you by Allah by yourself:

Whoever strives hard in God's cause does so only for his own good: for, verily, God does not stand in need of anything in all the worlds! And as for those who attain to faith and do righteous deeds, We shall most certainly efface their bad deeds, and shall most certainly reward them in accordance with the best that they ever did. [al-Ankabut 29: 6-7.]

Some people allow themselves to be dictated by others. The Quran states that the weak will say on the Day of judgment that they were coerced into following the dictates of others, but that Allah will reply that the excuse is not legitimate for the decision to deviate from the Straight Path was their own. [Qaf 50: 26-28]. Even Shaytan will stand up on the Day of Judgment saying: *'I invited you and you responded to me, so don't blame me, blame yourselves*.' [Ibrahim 14: 22] Ultimately, then, the blame and the reward will be yours, because the responsibility was yours:

On that Day all people will come forward, cut off from one another, to be shown their deeds. And so, he who shall have done an atom's weight of good, shall behold it; and he who shall have done an atom's weight of evil, shall behold it. [az-Zalzala 99: 6-8.]

Taking charge of your own affairs may certainly seem a daunting task, but one which you will accomplish with distinction if you appreciate and take advantage of the tremendous human potential that Allah has blessed you with. Allah says in the Quran:

Verily, We created man in the best conformation, and thereafter We reduced him to the lowest of the low - excepting only such as attain to faith and do good works: and theirs shall be a reward unending! [at Tin 95: 4-6.]

Tazkiya does not consist simply of ideas, but of life, behaviour and conduct. The key to success, according to the Quran, lies in having true faith. To inculcate true faith you must start by acquiring a sound knowledge of Islam through a dedicated study of the Quran and *Sunna*. You must then translate your knowledge into practice. For this to occur, you need to have firm resolve and determination. This, in turn, will produce *amal salih* or righteous conduct.

To aid you in your task, you must seek the company of those who are also striving to please Allah. They will encourage you towards righteousness and correct you when you deviate from the true Path. Your company also includes your mental and psychological company- the ideas you entertain, the ambitions you nurture, the sensitivities and sensibilities you develop and the books you read. All of these represent a form of company because they are your companions in solitude.

2. *Genuine Effort*

In order to succeed, you must have a deep desire to make a genuine effort to fulfill your obligations as a Muslim:

But as for those who strive hard in Our cause - We shall most certainly guide them onto paths that lead unto Us: for, behold God is indeed with the doers of good. [al-Ankabut 29: 69.]

With desire, of course, come actions. But know that it is not solely the results of your endeavours that count; what matters most is that you made your best effort. This is a very important point to appreciate because without genuine effort nothing can happen. Those who think that Prayer alone can work miracles are not living in a realistic world. Prayers are part of the effort, but Prayers are not the whole answer. If you pray, `Allah! Guide me and make me good', it is not going to bring you any benefit unless you are also determined to become good and make an effort towards becoming good. Once you have done the latter two things, then, of course, Prayer will be a source of *baraka* or Divine grace that will further inspire and strengthen your efforts. The initial desire and the ensuing effort to do and become good, is part of the continuing process of self development, a process that may begin at any point in life that you choose and continue till your last breath:

O you who have attained to faith! Be conscious of Allah with all the consciousness that is due to Him, and do not allow, death to overtake you until you have surrendered yourselves unto Him. [Ali Imran 3: 102.]

There will never be a point when you will be able to say that you are now a perfect person or that you have achieved your full potential. If at any point you feel so, then be sure that is the starting point of your downfall, On the other hand, you may find that the greater your desire to fulfill your obligations as a Muslim, the more you feel beset or plagued by frustration, despondency and despair in your heart and mind. All of us, whether young or old, have experienced these diseases, and often just give up. What we should try to remember at such times is that it is the intention and effort that matters, not the result. This effort must be a continuing process:

Be not, then, faint of heart, and grieve not: for you are bound to rise high if you are believers. [Ali Imran 3: 139]

3. *Sustaining Willpower*

To achieve the ultimate goal in life requires a sustained determination to do so, a willpower that is forever responsive and strong. In Quranic terminology this is called *irada*. *Irada* is basic to all our efforts. Without willing to do something you cannot do anything.

Irada is very different from desire. You always hear people reflecting upon unfulfilled aspirations. One of the main reasons why aspirations and dreams remain unfulfilled is that they are no more than desires which faded to assume the status of *irada*.

The Quran explains that one of the basic weaknesses in human nature which impedes self development is the weakness of will. While narrating the story of Adam, Allah informs:

And, indeed, long ago We made Our covenant with Adam; but he forgot and We found no firmness of purpose in him. [Ta Ha 20:115]

Irada requires strength and consistency and is indeed the antithesis of doubt, hesitation or lethargy. Once *irada* is firmly in place, then you must have no doubts and you must not hesitate.

Now, what purpose should *irada* serve? The Quran makes it clear that this will power must be a firm resolve to seek the pleasure of Allah because this is the part of the bargain that you must deliver:

And whoever desires [arada] *the Life to Come, and strive for it as it ought to be striven for, and are* [true] *Believers withal-they are the ones whose striving finds favour* [with God]. [al-Isra 17: 19]

4. *Reliance on Allah*

Self-confidence is borne from the Believer's intimate knowledge and understanding that Allah is ever ready to assist those who strive and struggle in His way. Self-confidence comes from depending upon Allah and knowing that He is there to help you, protect you and shower His mercies upon you:

So he who gives [in charity] *and fears* [Allah] *and* [in all sincerity] *testifies to the best- We will indeed make smooth for him the path to Bliss.* [al-Layl 92: 5-7.]

Self-confidence also emanates from knowing that Allah in His infinite mercy has equipped you with all that you require to undertake the tasks set before you. It is not characteristic of the One that is Most Just and Most Merciful to prepare you for a duel without equipping you with the necessary tools.

Self-confidence is thus borne of total reliance and trust in Allah. It is knowing that at every step of your journey Allah is there assisting you. If you constantly hold yourself back believing that you are weak and incapable and blame your incompetence on minor inadequacies, then you are bound to fail. You must never allow yourself to believe or feel that Allah has treated you unfairly or that He has placed upon you a burden you cannot shoulder for *on no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear*. [al-Baqara 2:286.]

Likewise, hope is central to your efforts and your success. You must sincerely hope and believe that everything you do to earn the pleasure of Allah will lead you to fulfillment. A superiority complex negates the task of self development. An inferiority complex is derived from a lack of confidence in Allah and oneself. You should never allow yourself to believe that you cannot fulfill your obligations nor should you despair of the mercy of Allah. Confidence, hope and determination are all important ingredients for your success:

Those unto whom men said: Lo! the people have gathered against you, therefore fear them. But it only increased them in faith and they cried.. Allah is sufficient for us! Most Excellent is He in Whom we trust! [Ali Imran 3: 173-174]

You must be wary, however, of the kind of self-confidence that causes a person to proclaim himself self-sufficient. Modern concepts of self sufficiency are indeed an evil form of *shirk* or polytheism. To ascribe self-sufficiency to one's self is to assume for oneself an attribute reserved only for Allah. For the Muslim, self-confidence is wholly dependent upon the trust one places in Allah; it is not an arrogant proclamation of complete independence from Allah. Allah alone is self-Sufficient. All else is reliant upon Him for existence.

5. *The Best Use of Time*

Time is not money or gold; it is life and it is limited. You must begin to appreciate every moment of your life and always strive to make the best use of it. With all the demands of worldly life on your time, you will yet need to find time for self-development and maximise its potential. The better route towards self-development is, of course, to integrate all your efforts into a structured daily life. *Imam* al-Ghazali, may God have mercy on him, in his great work, *Ihya Ulum ad Din*, gives the following

advice:

You should structure your time, arrange your regular devotions and assign to each function a set period of time during which it is given first priority but which it does not overstep. For if you abandon yourself to neglect and purposelessness, as cattle do, and just do anything that may occur to you at any time it happens to occur to you, most of your time will be wasted. Your time is your life, and your life is your capital; it is the basis of your transactions [with God], and the means to attain to everlasting felicity, in the proximity of God the Exalted. Each of your breaths is a priceless jewel, and when it passes away it never returns.

Remember also that `the deeds most loved by Allah [are those] done regularly, even if they are few.' (*Bukhari, Muslim*.) While you must always strive to make the best use of your time, you must always aim for excellence in everything you undertake, whether at school, at home, at work or at play. Indeed, the Prophet has said, `Verily Allah has prescribed *ihsan* (proficiency and excellence) in all things. (*Muslim*.)

6. *Tazkiya -All-embracing Process.*

Islam does not subscribe to the type of asceticism where we purify our hearts and yet remain immersed in political, economic or social corruption. *Tazkiya* must encompass our entire life - the privacy of our thoughts as well as their social manifestations in our daily life. Everything must be in conformity with Allah's will.

This will of God also requires you to seek and maintain a delicate balance between the various obligations that demand your attention; between your obligations to Allah, your obligations towards others and your obligations towards yourself The Prophet advised us against extremism of any kind. It is reported that he said to Abdullah ibn Amr:

`Have I heard right that you fast everyday and stand in prayer all night?' Abdullah replied, `Yes, O Messenger of God.' The Prophet said, `Do not do that. Fast, as well as eat and drink. Stand in prayer, as well as sleep. For your body has a right upon you, your eyes have a right upon you, your wife has a right upon you, and your guest has a right upon you.' (*Bukhari, Muslim*.)

Unless you approach *tazkiya* as an all-embracing process, you will find that your life is compartmentalized, certain parts impeding the development of others. This can only result in a life of disharmony and unhappiness. Approached as a comprehensive and all-embracing process, however, you will find that each part of your life will complement some other part. This should, God willing, make your struggle on the path to God and *Janna*, easier and full of grace.

As you struggle to make headway on the path to God, always remember that you have an excellent example before you. This is the example of the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace. Often we would like to emulate our sports heroes, our parents, our teachers, our friends or others who attract our attention. For your spiritual development, however, the most beautiful example is that of the Prophet. Allah says in the Quran:

You have, indeed, in the Messenger of God an excellent exemplar, whoever places his hopes in God and the Final Days and who remembers Allah much. [al-Ahzab 33: 21]

BLESSINGS AND BENEFITS

The decision to purify and develop yourself requires that you clearly define the path and consider the ways and means to achieve Paradise. This whole process will not only purify your heart, but also affect your entire life and the will of Allah will become so much easier for you to follow. Following the Divine Will is, of course, *tazkiya* itself, Soon, all your efforts will be directed towards the ultimate goal - the pleasure of Allah and Paradise.

Know that every sin can be effaced through forgiveness, and forgiveness is a sure way to Paradise. As you strive to better yourself, then, simultaneously and continuously pray for forgiveness for all your shortcomings. God says: *And whoever repents and believes and works righteous deeds, God changes evil deeds into good ones, and God is Ever-Forgiving, Merciful.* [al-Furqan 25:70]

It is a misconception to believe that simply by setting up Paradise as the ultimate goal, one can get there without any further effort. It is also a misconception that Paradise can solely be achieved by concentrating only on certain aspects of life, the `religious and the spiritual'. The very fact that Paradise is the ultimate objective means that *tazkiya* must be pursued in all aspects of life, and in life as a whole. Consider, for example, the following:

- Is not honesty a means to enter Paradise?
- Will not a sense of responsibility enable me to enter Paradise?
- Will not striving to fulfill the needs of fellow human beings make me deserve Paradise?
- Will not abstaining from vain talk and aimless actions, bring me closer to Paradise?
- Is not consciousness of the best use of my time a key to Paradise?
- Will not keeping promises and offering *Salat* on time, which are distinguishing traits of the righteous, put me on the highway to Paradise?
- Must not all of the above be sought to attain Paradise?

Every effort that is legitimate and is aimed at attaining Paradise is also an integral part of the process of *tazkiya*

Insha Allah (God-willing), if you take heed of all the prerequisites, blessings and benefits of *tazkiya*, you will surely find the right environment, the true companionship and brotherhood and the most appropriate training programmes to make the task of self development easier and more rewarding.

So give the good news to My servants who listen to the word [of God]*, then follow the beauty in it. Such are they whom God has guided And such are they who are endowed with understanding.* [az-Zumar 39: 17-18.]

SUMMARY

The most comprehensive goal for a Muslim is the single-minded desire to attain Paradise. This desire to seek Paradise is a life-long process which can be sparked in a moment- and this desire will provide the means and the momentum to reach the goal.

Your model for self-development is that of the Prophet Muhammad. In your quest for Paradise, you must personally take charge of your responsibilities, develop the willpower to perform and make a genuine effort to fulfill your obligations, ensure that you make the best use of your time and adopt a balanced approach to life.

Remember that every effort that is legitimate and is aimed at attaining Paradise is also an integral part of the process of *tazkiya* and that every sin can be effaced through forgiï&H§ss - and that forgiveness is the sure way to Paradise. *And as for the one who fears to stand before his Lord and who restrains himself from base desires, the Garden is surely the abode*. [an-Naziat 79: 40-41]

May Allah enable us to be among those who purify themselves for *it is God Who causes whomever He wills to grow in purity; and none shall be wronged by as much as a hair's breath* [an-Nisa 4: 49]. *Were it not for God's favour upon you and His grace, not one of you would ever have remained pure. For it is God who causes whomever He wills to grow in purity: for God is all-Hearing all-Knowing* [an-Nur 24: 21.]

CHAPTER TWO: A Life of Remembrance

IN a verse of the Quran that I love very much, Allah, Most Gracious and Loving, commends:

Remember Me and I shall remember you. Be grateful unto Me and deny Me not. [al-Baqara 2:152.]

Can you imagine a more gratifying state than this, where, when you remember Allah, the Creator, Sustainer and Lord of the Universe, He remembers you in return? The same exhortation has been beautifully conveyed in a *hadith qudsi*:

I treat My servant as he hopes that I would treat him. I am with him whenever he remembers Me: if he remembers Me in his heart, I remember him in My `heart'; if he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a gathering far better than that gathering; if he draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him an arm's length; if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running. (*Bukhari, Muslim*)

Those who remember Allah standing, sitting and reclining and who reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth are highly commended in the Noble Quran. They are wise in that they fill their hearts with the remembrance of God in every, moment, in every circumstance and in every posture of their lives. [Ali Imran 3: 191]

The exhortation to remember Allah at all times is a reflection of Allah's all-embracing and overwhelming love for us. The door to Allah is always open to us: *Remember Me and 1 will remember you*. We need only find our way to and through that door.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DHIKR

Regarding the significance of *dhikrullah* or the remembrance of God, Allah says in the Quran, itself the ultimate reminder (*dhikr*) to all the worlds [Sad 38: 87], the following:

Remember Allah. for He has guided you. [al-Baqara 2:198.]

O you who believe! Remember Allah often with much remembrance. And glorify Him morning and evening. [Luqman 31: 41-42.]

And men who remember God much and women who remember - God has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward. [al-Ahzab 33: 35]

Hadith literature is similarly replete with references to the remembrance of Allah:

The servant cannot perform a better deed which will save him from God's punishment than the remembrance of God. (*Malik*.)

Whoever wishes to feast in the gardens of Paradise, let him remember God often. (*Tirmidhi*.)

Indeed, with regard to *dhikr*, the Quran concludes: *And the remembrance of Allah is the greatest deed without doubt.* [al-Ankabut 29:45]

The significance of *dhikr* lies in the fact that it is God's own chosen and recommended mode by which the *muminun* or Believers show gratitude for having been shown the straight path. In addition, it is indeed the surest way of attaining God's forgiveness and achieving the ultimate reward of Paradise.

The importance of *dhikr* then is not difficult to understand. It is *dhikr* that purifies your *qalb* or heart and makes it sound. And you can only attain salvation and true success by having a pure and sound heart.

The *qalb* or `heart' referred to here is not the pump in your breast that pushes blood around your body but rather the centre or locus of your personality which pumps out your desires and motivations and which makes you conduct yourself as you do. It is this *qalb* that lies at your centre and dictates your actions which is the key to your ultimate success. Thus, with reference to the Day of Judgment, the Quran declares:

[It will be a Day) *when neither wealth nor children shall profit* [and when] *only he* [will be saved] *who comes before God with a sound heart* [free of evil]. [ash-Shuara 26:88-89.]

This point is more elaborately made in a *hadith* in which the Prophet says:

Listen [to me] carefully. There is a lump of flesh in the body - if it is set right and made good, the entire body becomes good and healthy; but if it becomes diseased, the entire body becomes diseased. Remember well - it is the Heart. (*Bukhari.*)

If the heart is the key to ultimate salvation and success, it may, likewise, be the seat of much corruption and open doors to many evils. It may facilitate the corruption of political and economic

activities and ultimately the social institutions of a society. Where such a state prevails, the Quran suggests that it is because people, individually, have become diseased in their hearts. [al-Baqara 2:10.] In this state, people stop seeing and doing what is right. The Quran explains that this is not because they have become blind in their eyes but because their hearts have become blind. [al-Hajj 22: 46.] This blindness only draws them nearer to the ultimate chastisement.

It is the heart, as the decider of our ultimate fate, that must then be the starting point of any *tazkiya* programme, to purify this heart and then summon it to the service of mankind.

Ibn al-Qayyim, one of the great scholars of Islam, states in his Kitab al Adhkar (The Book of Remembrance), that 'the heart which is devoid of the remembrance of Allah is a heart that is dead'; it is dead even and long before the body carrying the heart reaches its grave. Indeed, this living body that carries the heart is the heart's grave. Ibn al-Qayyim's statement is reminiscent of the hadith of tire Prophet which states: `The difference between someone who remembers His Lord and someone who does not is like the difference between the living and the dead.' (*Bukhari*.) The statement is also reminiscent of the following verse of the Quran: Do not become like those who forget Allah and Allah makes them forget themselves. It is they who are truly deprived. [al-Hashr 59:19.]

The purpose of *tazkiya* is to ensure that the heart never falls into a sorry state of being and that it is always alive with the remembrance of God. *Prosperous indeed is one who purifies himself and remembers the name of His Guardian-Lord, and prays* [unto Him]. [al-Ala 87: 14-15.] The Prophet further emphasised the importance of *dhikr* when he said to his Companions: 'Shall I not inform you of the best of your actions, the purest in the sight of your Lord, which raises your rank to the highest, which is better for you than spending gold and silver, better than meeting your enemy so that you strike at their necks and they strike at yours?' They replied: 'Yes, indeed,' and he said: 'It is the remembrance of Allah.' (*Tirmidhi*.)

Strive then, to fill all your moments, all your thoughts and all your actions with His remembrance. Recite *tasbih* or words of glorification and praise to punctuate all your actions and achievements.

THE MEANING OF DHIKR

What is the precise meaning of '*dhikr*'? What is its scope and what does it entail? Does it simply involve certain utterances of the tongue, like *Subhanallah* (I glorify Allah's absolute perfection), *Alhamdu lillah* (All praise be to Allah), *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest), *La ilaha illallah* (There is no god but Allah) and the recitation of some other selected verses of the Quran, or is there more to it? Of course, such utterances of the tongue and recitation of verses of the Quran are important. In fact they are very important forms of *dhikr* for, indeed, the best forms of remembrance are those that involve both the heart and the tongue. You must understand, however, that the scope of *dhikr* is considerably wider.

Dhikr must not only be felt by the heart and uttered with the tongue, but must also affect and effect *amal salih*, or good deeds. Significantly, Ibn al-Qayyim suggests that *dhikr* encompasses `any and every particular moment when you are thinking, saying or doing things which Allah likes: Hence, if your conversation is filled with the words of God, this is *dhikr* and if all your actions are in accordance with His will, this is *dhikr*. Indeed Allah commends that we remember Him while standing, sitting and even while reclining. This is only possible if *dhikr* embraces every single aspect of life. Consider for example the following verse of the Quran where *dhikr* is emphasised in both Prayer and business activity:

O Believers, when the call to Payer is sounded on the Day of Congregation, hasten to Allah's remembrance and leave all worldly commerce. This a for your own good, if you but knew . And when the Prayer it finished then disperse through the land, and seek of the bounty of Allah; and remember Allah frequently that you may prosper. [al-Jumua 62:9-10]

Attending the *Salat al-jumua*, listening to the *khutba* or sermon and performing the congregational Prayer are all well known as forms of *dhikr*. But in our worldly pursuits as well we are urged to remember Allah even more often.

We may thus conclude, that attending to your personal needs, earning a livelihood and spending on your family are all forms of *dhikr*. But of course, they can only be *dhikr* if, alongside with the relevant *adhkar* or supplications in the heart and on the tongue, they are done in obedience to Allah, for His pleasure, to attain Janna. Otherwise, as the Quran warns us, far from being *dhikr*, they may have the opposite effect:

Let not your worldly possessions and your children make you neglectful of Allah's remembrance. But spend in the way of Allah. [al-Munafiqun 63:9-10.]

THE METHODS OF DHIKR

We have thus far discussed the significance, meaning and scope of *dhikr*. Let us now turn to the various forms and methods of *dhikr*. How do we remember Allah in the morning and evening, during the day and at night and while standing, sitting or reclining.' There are basically two forms of *dhikr*. The first involves continuous and sustained inner awareness of Allah in all that we say and do in our daily lives. The second involves mechanisms, whether performed individually or collectively, that help to develop the first.

1. *Sustained Awareness of Allah*

Let us begin with a discussion of the first form and its methods. How can you remember Allah throughout the normal course of your day without withdrawing from the routine of your daily worldly life? How can you ensure that your personal life, family life, professional life and other activities all continue in full swing, and yet, at the same time, ensure that your life as a whole - every moment of it - is permeated with remembrance of Allah? Such an all-pervading *dhikr* can be an onerous task, but one you can accomplish - with some ease. Let me remind you of four states of consciousness that you must strive to develop by remembering certain things, absorbing them and reminding yourself of them often.

ONE: *Say to yourself*: I am in Allah's presence; He is watching me.: *Say to yourself*: I am in Allah's presence; He is watching me.

If ever you are alone, He is the second and that if you are two, He is the third. *He is with you wherever you are*. [al-Mujadala 58: 7.] *He is nearer to you than your-jugular vein*. [Qaf 50: 16-18.] He is watching everything that you do and hearing everything that you say. He is ever present and His knowledge is all encompassing. Remind yourself of this as often as you can, and throughout the day- every time you begin a new task, and every time you speak. Indeed, your aim should be to impress this on your heart in such a way that it ultimately becomes your very breath. When the Prophet was asked by a Companion about the best method of purifying himself, he replied: `You should always remember that Allah is with you wherever you are.' (*Tirmidhi*.)

TWO: *Say to yourself*: Everything I have has been given to me by Allah.

All that there is - surrounding you, on you and in you - comes from Allah alone. There is none that creates or gives anything but Allah. [an-Nahl 16:78; Ya Sin 36:33-35.] Therefore, reflect upon all the *baraka* or blessing that He has created you with and be thankful to Him. In all the *adhkar* that the Prophet has taught us, *hamd* or gratefulness to Allah is a constant theme. Many of these *adhkar* are simple to learn, and indeed, it was the most simple of his *adhkar* that he used most frequently. When the Prophet rose in the morning, he would say *Alhamdu lillah*; whenever he ate or drank he would say *Alhamdu lillah*; and even when he relieved himself he would give thanks to Allah. Learn as many of the *adhkar* as you can, and throughout the day, as you witness all that Allah has blessed you with, punctuate your day with these *adhkar.*

If ever you appear to be short of things to be thankful for, recall the hadith of the Prophet: `There are 360 joints in the body and for each joint you must give a *sadaqa* [thanks or charity] each day.' (*Bukhari*.) You must give a *sadaqa* for each one of them because without any one of them you will be incomplete and handicapped. You must do this on a daily basis for should any one of them

become damaged one day, you will similarly become incapacitated.

Additionally, you may remind yourself that, as we now know from our knowledge of human physiology, your heart beats 72 times a minute. Every time it beats, it does so with the permission of Allah. The moment He withdraws that permission, the heart will stop beating and your life will certainly come to an end. If you feel that there is nothing else to thank Allah for, then thank him for the life that He has given you - for, so long as there is life, there is hope.

THREE: *Say to yourself*: Nothing in this world can happen without His permission.

Everything lies in the hands of Allah. No harm can befall you and no benefit can reach you except as Allah ordains. It is as the Quran informs us: *If God should touch you with misfortune, none can remove it but He, and if He should touch you with good fortune, He has power over all things. He alone holds sway over His creatures; He is the All-wise, the All-aware*. [al-Anam 6: 17-18.]

The Prophet Muhammad would supplicate to Allah after each Prayer:

O Allah, whatever You want to give me, no one can stop it from coming to me and whatever You want to prevent from coming to me, nobody can give to me.

Prayer after Prayer, you should recite these beautiful words. And beyond that, remind yourself as much as you can and throughout the day, especially as you expect something to happen, or not to happen, that everything happens only as He commands, and by His permission.

FOUR: *Say to yourself*: I am going to return to Allah one day and that day could be today.

You do not know when you will leave this world. It may be that the coming morning is your last morning, or perhaps the coming evening is your last evening. Indeed, it may be that this hour is your last hour, or even, that this moment is your last moment. Such an uncertainty does not, of course, justify a complete withdrawal from this life so as to prepare for the Next in some monastic fashion. It is important, however, that you are always conscious of this uncertainty, to the extent that it motivates you to spend every moment of your remaining life seriously, considering it as a gift from Allah and spending the resources He has blessed you with - time, ability and energy - as He has advised. Then, and only then, will your life have achieved what is required of it, and your return will achieve what is required of it. To help you attain this state of consciousness, recall and reflect upon the following Quranic verse as much as you can and throughout the day: *from Allah we came and to Him we shall return*. [al-Baqara 2:156]

These are the four states of consciousness that can help us achieve a life completely devoted to the remembrance of Allah. To try to reach these four states simultaneously, and with sincerity, can only purify you. To try in a determined fashion to reach these four states will lead you inevitably to Paradise.

2. *Specific Methods of Dhikr*

For us to achieve a continuous and sustained awareness of Him, Allah, in His Wisdom and Mercy, has

taught us some very specific mechanisms of *dhikr*. These include: the formal *ibada-Salat, Sawm, Zakat* and *Hajj*; *tilawa* of the Quran, *dua*, i*stighfar* and *tawba*, seeking the company of the righteous and *dawa*. Together these mechanisms or methods constitute what we have classified above as the second form of *dhikr*, but here we may sub-divide them into two groups: those that can be performed individually and those that are performed collectively.

3. *Methods of Individual Dhikr*

The foremost of the specific methods pertaining to individual *dhikr* include the *fard* or obligatory *ibada*. Allah has said in a *hadith qudsi*:

My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more loved by Me than what I have made obligatory. (*Bukhari*.)

Each specific formal *ibada* or act of servitude to God, has been ordained as an instrument of self development. When we observe our *Salat* regularly at the proper times, together in congregation whenever possible, with clear intentions and sincerity; when we fast in the month of *Ramadan* with awareness and resolve; when we give *Zakat* as soon as it falls due with a generous heart; and when we fulfill the obligations of *Hajj* as soon as we have the means, we will gain that special closeness to Allah that He has promised. Indeed, we may get even closer to God through additional observance of these specific formal acts of servitude, for Allah continues in the *hadith qudsi*:

My servant continues to draw nearer to Me with additional devotions until I love him. When I love him, I become the hearing with which he hears, the sight with which he sees, the hand with which he strikes and the foot with which he walks. Were he to ask for something I would surely give it, and were he to ask for refuge, I would surely grant him refuge. (*Bukhari*.)

For each specific *fard ibada*, there is an additional *nafl* or superogatory equivalent. These are as follows:

- **The *Sunna Salat*** - these include the additional Prayers before and after the five obligatory ones, but just as importantly the *Tahajjud* Prayer.

- **The *Sunna* Fasts** - as recommended by the Prophet and to be practised on Mondays and Thursdays of each week, the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth day of each lunar calendar month, and other recommended days in the Islamic year.

- ***Sadaqa fi Sabilillah*** - the giving of voluntary charity, however much and whenever one can afford, for the pleasure of Allah.

- **The *Umra*** - performance of the voluntary short pilgrimage.

In addition to the *fard* and their related *nafl ibada*, there are two further specific methods of individual *dhikr*: the first is the daily recitation of the Quran, and the second, frequent *dua* or supplications to Allah for forgiveness, guidance and fulfillment of needs.

Let us explore each of these specific methods pertaining to individual *dhikr* in more detail, particularly as instruments of *tazkiya* and *dhikr*

A. Salat

Salat is the foremost form of *ibada* that Allah Himself has prescribed for us. In His own words He commands: *Establish regular Prayer that you may remember Me.* [Ta Ha 20:14.] The whole purpose of *Salat* is to be ever conscious of Allah, the Creator, Lord and Sustainer of all things. When we perform *Salat* we involve our tongue, our heart, our mind and indeed our whole body. In this sense, *Salat* is indeed, one of the most comprehensive forms of *dhikr*. It is perhaps for this reason that Allah states in a *hadith qudsi*: `Out of all the ways through which My servant gets closer to Me, *Salat* is the dearest to Me.' (*Bukhari*.) It is unfortunate, therefore, that we do not always take full advantage of this gift. We may pray five times each day but few of us remain conscious for long that in Prayer we have the best means to develop a strong connection with Allah. We may compare the obligatory *Salat* to bathing five times a day. If after such frequent bathing, your body remains dirty, then we may question the usefulness and efficacy of such bathing.

Similarly, if after regular observance of Prayer your heart remains unmoved, your morals remain corrupt and your conduct remains unaffected, we may question the usefulness and efficacy of your Prayer? If you enter into *Salat* and come out of it the same person, then you have missed something, and you may have missed a golden opportunity to achieve something great.

Remember, though, *Salat* is an obligation. Whether your heart is attentive or not, it must be performed. You cannot give up Prayer because to you it appears useless. Don't give up the obligation but try to infuse it with the purpose it seeks to serve - remembrance of Allah.

How can you improve the quality of your *Salat*? Remember, first and foremost, that as soon as you commence your *Salat*, Shaytan makes it his duty to fill your mind with anything and everything but thoughts of Allah. [al-Araf 7: 16-17.] For, Shaytan is aware that your remembrance of Allah will draw you closer to Him, so he tries ceaselessly to disengage your mind and heart from such remembrance, so that you may never achieve that closeness. The most important hurdle to overcome from the outset, therefore, is absentmindedness. It is this that destroys the quality of your Prayer, for Allah does not accept the Prayers of a wandering mind. The Prophet Muhammad said:

God does not accept the Prayers of an individual until his heart achieves in it what his body has achieved. [Al-Ghazali in *Ihya*. See Inner Dimensions of Islamic Worship, Islamic Foundation, Leicester, p. 29.]

The ability to concentrate in Prayer may be improved by undertaking adequate psychological, mental and physical preparation before the Prayer and by utilising certain techniques whilst performing the Prayer. Below we discuss some of them.

i. Psychological and Mental Preparation

- The planning of your daily activities should revolve around the five daily *Salat*. [al-Ma'arij 70: 22-23.] Do not plan everything else and then try to fit Prayer into your busy schedule.

- Ensure that you are conversant with all the rules and regulations governing your Prayer. Research in depth the Quranic verses and *ahadith* relating to the virtues of *Salat*.

- Be punctual with your Prayer. [an-Nisa 4:103] Get into the habit of praying at the earliest hour. Do not procrastinate. The Prophet said, `the deed most loved by Allah is Prayer performed on time.' (*Muslim*.)

- Pray as much of your *fard Salat* in *jama'a* or congregation as is possible. [al-Baqara 2: 43.]

- Avoid praying in a state in which you are mentally and physically fatigued. [an-Nisa 4: 43]

- Rid your mind of all evil thoughts and ideas. [al-Maun 107: 4-6.]

- Keep your mind free of worldly worries and engagements.

- Plan what *ayat / duas* you are going to recite.

- If you do not understand Arabic learn the meaning of what you recite in your Prayer.

- Remind yourself that engaging in Prayer offers you an opportunity to release yourself from the pressures and tensions of this world. The Prophet has said that in Prayer was placed the comfort of his eyes. Therefore cherish the opportunity to remove the shackles and burdens of this world from your shoulders. [al-Baqara 2: 45.]

- Use your Prayer to remain focused on your mission in life to bring your entire being to serve only Allah.

- Use your Prayer as a source of strength, inspiration and enthusiasm for your life and activities.

ii. Physical Preparation

- Fulfill all your personal needs before you commence your Prayer, for example, thirst, hunger and calls of nature.

- Pray in a pure physical state. Perform your *wudu* with care and perfection. [al-Maida 5: 6.]

- Although the whole earth is a *masjid* or a place of worship, choose a place that is clean.

- Pray in an environment free of noise and one where there is no distraction.

- Adorn yourself with clean and respectable clothes for Allah has said: *O Children of Adam, wear your best clothes at every place of worship*. [al-Araf 7:31.]

iii. Performing Your Prayer

- Assess your mental readiness for Prayer before its commencement, during the various postures with its attendant recitations, after each *raka* and ultimately at the end- Try to make improvements at each stage

- Pray with humility both in your mental state and in your physical manner. Pray with hope and awe, asking Allah for His mercy and forgiveness.

- Remind yourself continually that you are talking to the most important `Being' in your life - your Creator and Sustainer. He is in front of you. You are facing Him and you are involved in a dialogue with Him. [al-Alaq 96: 19.]

- Commence your Prayer by seeking Allah's help and protection from the influences of Shaytan. [an-Nahl 16: 98.]

- Lower your gaze while praying and do not allow the physical environment to distract you. Anas related that the Prophet said: `My dear son, be sure to avoid being distracted during Prayer, for, to become distracted while praying is a disaster.' (*Tabarani*.)

- Use a variety of Quranic verses and *duas* in your Prayer to achieve greater concentration and awareness.

- Adopt a whispering technique in your recitation. This will increase your ability to remain focused on what you are saying. [al-Isra 17:110.]

- As you recite the Quran, translate it into your own language so that your attention is held. As you concentrate upon the meaning and implications of the words, *insha Allah*, all thoughts of worldly ideas will disappear.

- On each occasion that you recite the *Sifat* or attributes of Allah in *ruku* and *sajda*, consider how indebted you are and how grateful you should be to Allah and express your true emotions.

- Utilise the occasion of *sajda* to make additional *dua* to Allah. The Prophet said: ' A servant is nearest to his Lord when he is in *sajda*, so increase your supplication when in *sajda*.' (*Muslim*.)

- Make your Prayer of moderate duration so that you do not become physically and mentally tired but be aware that while in Prayer you must take your time praying.

- Give due regard to the proper performance of all the physical postures.

- Pray as if it is your last Prayer. The Messenger of God said: `When you stand up to pray, perform your prayer as if it were your last, do not say anything you will have to make excuses for tomorrow, and resolve to place no hope in what is in the hands of men.' (*Ahmad*.)

Performing your prayer in a satisfactory manner should lead to a radical change in the way you lead your daily life. *Salat* must be as the Quran states: *Surely, Salat prevents indecency and evil* [al-Ankabut 29: 45.] Your improved and more disciplined life will in turn help the quality of your Prayer to increase even more. The two should feed one another and continuously reinforce each other.

Note that there is punishment for a Prayer not performed satisfactorily. It will be a witness against you rather than a witness for you on the Day of Judgment. However, the reward for a Prayer well performed is immeasurable. The Prophet said: `If a man performs two *rakas* of *Salat* without the distraction of any worldly thought, all his previous sins will be forgiven.' (*Bukhari*.)

iv. Tahajjud Salat

Even though it is not obligatory, try to establish *Tahajjud Salat* as part of your nightly activities. The Prophet said: `The best Prayer after the *fard* Prayer is the night Prayer.' (*Muslim*.)

One of the characteristics of the *Ibadur Rahman* or Servants of the Most Merciful, is that they get up at night and perform *Tahajjud Salat*. [al-Furqan 25: 64] *Qiyam al-layl* or night vigil is a source of great spiritual energy. The Prophet has said:

Keep up *qiyam al-layl.* It was the way of the virtuous who came before you, it draws you nearer to your Lord, atones for your sins, forbids you from evil and protects the body from sickness. (*Tirmidhi*.)

When a man wakes up his wife at night and they pray two *rakas* (units) together, they are written down among the men and women who remember Allah. (*Abu Dawud*)

The Quran also commends the one who utilizes the early hours of each day to engage in remembrance of Allah: *Is one who worships devoutly during the hours of night prostrating himself or standing* [in adoration] *and who places his hope in the mercy of His Lord* - [like one who does not]? *Say: 'Are those equal - those who know and those who do not know?' It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition.* [Az-Zumar 39:9]

B. Sawm

Sawm or fasting is another important instrument of *tazkiya.* It holds a unique status among all other forms of *ibada*. In a *hadith qudsi* we are told:

Every good deed of a man is granted manifold increase, ten to seven hundred times. But Allah says: Fasting is an exception; it is exclusively for Me, and I will give reward for it as much as I wish. (*Bukhari, Muslim*.)

The fruit of fasting ought to be that rich inner quality which the Quran calls *taqwa*:

O Believers! Fasting is ordained for you, even as it was ordained for those before you, that you might attain taqwa. [al-Baqara 2:183]

Taqwa is the most basic prerequisite for being guided by Allah. It entails God-consciousness, a sense of responsibility, accountability, dedication and awe. It is that which prompts and inspires us to fulfill our responsibilities towards the Creator. *Taqwa* is the main criterion by which Allah values the deeds of a Muslim. The Quran states: *Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most God-fearing of you. Verily God is all-Knowing and all-Wise.* [al-Hujurat 49: 13.]

We must strive to the utmost to inculcate *taqwa* in our lives as Allah has ordained: *Take provisions with you, but the best of provisions is taqwa. So remain conscious of Me, O you who are endowed with insight*. [al-Baqara 2:197]

Fasting teaches us to remember Allah. It helps to instill in us certain attributes and qualities which develop our *taqwa.* We discuss some of these below.

i. Fulfilling Allah's Wishes

While fasting, the most basic physical needs - Food, water and sleep - are readily and joyfully sacrificed. Hunger and thirst are no longer harmful; Allah's displeasure is harmful. Physical pleasures no longer hold any lure; Allah's rewards do. The scale of values is turned upside down. The measures of comfort and pain, success and failure are radically changed. However, whatever the physical discomfort, the mortification of the flesh is certainly not the desired object. The gifts of Allah are there to be enjoyed but limits by Him must also be strictly observed. Once the sun has set, the fast must be broken and the sooner the better. All that was forbidden during the fasting hours, at His command, becomes permissible again, at His command. Similarly, eating before dawn is strongly encouraged even though the hour is early for it provides the necessary strength for the rigours of the day ahead. Fasting and praying are obvious acts of worship but eating also constitutes a form of worship.

ii. Willpower

Fasting strengthens our willpower. The Prophet has said: '*Sawm* is a shield [or a screen or a shelter from the Hell-fire].' (*Bukhari*.) The regime of dawn-to-sunset abstinence from food, drink and sex, for the sake of Allah alone, internalises the lesson that we must never enter, acquire or even touch that which does not belong to us under the law of Allah. A man can no longer remain a slave to his

own self-indulgence as he prepares for the arduous journey on the road to His Lord.

For many, it is difficult to see the value of long hours of hunger, thirst and sleeplessness. Productivity losses are difficult to accept in an age that has tried to promote economic growth at all costs. According to Islam, however, we are created to live a life of total submission to the One and Only Allah, and this purpose must be paramount in all scales of values. Fasting is crucial to this understanding. It shows that its purpose, like Allah's guidance through His Prophets and Books and all the rituals of worship, is to train us how we must live totally and unreservedly in submission to Allah.

iii. Protection From Shaytan

Fasting enables us to protect ourselves from the evil influences of Shaytan. While fasting: `Eyes should refrain from seeing evil, ears from hearing evil, tongues from speaking evil and hearts from reflecting evil.' (*Bukhari*.) The Prophet also said: `Five things break a man's fast: lying, backbiting, scandal-mongering, perjury and a lustful gaze.' (*Azdi*.) [Cited by al-Ghazali in *Ihya Ulum al-Din*. See *Inner Dimension of Islamic Worship*, Islamic Foundation, Leicester, P. 76.]

C. Tilawa of the Quran

The most important nourishment for the *qalb* or heart is the Quran. Those who lived in the time of the Prophet received their training and inspiration from the Quran. It was their guide, their light and their leader. Likewise, it must be your constant companion.

The Quran contains a treasure house of soul-stirring inspiration and wisdom. We can and should spend hours in understanding the Quran. There are thousands of pages of *tafsir* or Quranic exegesis to read. But we must know that the real test of benefiting from the Quran lies somewhere else. The Quran says that when people really listen to it, their faith must increase:

Believers are those who, when God is mentioned, feel a tremor in their heart, and whenever His Messages are conveyed to them their faith is strengthened. [Al-Anfal 8: 2.]

Where there is a fire, there is smoke. If the `fire' of *iman* has been lit inside the heart, there must be smoke, and you will see that those who truly listen to the Quran, their eyes begin to well up with tears which trickle down their cheeks.

Nowadays, when we listen to the Quran or read it, our hearts are not moved, nor do our lives change. It is as if water is felling on a rock and flowing away. Our task is to replace this hard rock with soft absorbent soil so that the Quran may nourish the seed that has been planted. We should always study the Quran as if it is being revealed to us today. One of the greatest injustices we do to the Quran is that we read it as if it were something of the past and of no relevance to the present.

Remember that the whole purpose of the man is to guide you and to change you by bringing you into submission to Allah. As you read it, also try to live by what it invites you to. If it does not have any impact upon your actions and if you do not observe what it enjoins and avoid what it prohibits, then you are not getting anywhere nearer the Quran. In fact, one who reads the Quran and does not try to act upon it may be more likely to be cursed and punished by Allah. The Prophet said:

Many of the hypocrites in my *Umma* will be from among the reciters. (*Ahmad*.)

He is not a Believer in the Quran who makes *halal* or lawful what has been made *haram* or prohibited. (*Tirmidhi*.)

It is also narrated that many Companions, like Uthman and Abdullah ibn Masud, once they learnt ten verses from the Prophet did not move further unless they had `learnt' it fully both in understanding and in action; that is how they sometimes spent years in learning only one *sura* or chapter.

If you sincerely start changing your life according to the Quran, Allah will certainly help you and make the path easy for you. Allah reassures us in the Quran:

Those who say, `Our Lord is Allah,' and continue upon the straight way, the angels descend upon them: Do not fear, nor be grieved, and receive glad tidings of the Garden which you were promised. We are your supporters in this world and in the Hereafter. And for you therein is whatever your souls desire, and for you therein is whatever you ask for.' [al-Fussilat 41:30-31.]

i. *The Method of Tilawa*

Tilawa or recitation is an act in which your whole person - soul, heart, mind, tongue and body - should participate. Thus, to recite the Quran, as it deserves to be recited, is not a light task; but neither is it impossible nor difficult. Otherwise, the Quran could not have been meant for everyone; nor could it be the mercy and the guidance that it surely is. There are a few obligations regarding recitation of the Quran which you should keep in mind.

- Read the Quran every day; in fact do not consider a day complete without it. It is better to read regularly, even if it be a small portion, than to read large sections, but only occasionally.

- Everyday you must also find time to memorise as much of the Quran as you can. You can start with small *Suras* and short passages and then move on to longer portions.

- Read as much of the Quran in Prayer as you can, especially during the night, after the *Isha*, before the *Fajr* and in the *Fajr*, as nothing is more effective in making you attuned to the Quran and ensuring you absorb it than reading it in the night or in the morning. Indeed, the early hours of the morning is a particularly blessed time to recite the Quran: *Indeed, the recitation of the Quran at dawn is ever witnessed.* [al-Isra 17:78]

- Read the Quran in a good voice, as we have been told: `Beautify the Quran with your voices' (*Abu Dawud*); but also remember that the real beauty is the beauty that comes with the fear of Allah in the heart: `His recitation and voice are the most beautiful so that when you hear him, you think he fears Allah.' (*Darimi*.)

- Read the Quran with concentration and understanding. The Prophet told Ibn Umar not to finish reading the Quran in less than a week He also said that one who finishes it in less than three days does not understand any of it. One companion said that he preferred to read a short *Sura* like *al-Qaria* with proper understanding than to hastily finish long ones like *al-Baqara* and *Al-Imran*.

ii. Your Constant Companion

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, has said, `I am leaving you with two *murshids.'* The term *murshid* refers to the one who guides to the right path. The first is the talking *murshid*, the Quran, mid the second is the silent *murshid*, *mawt* or death. As much as you keep in touch with the Quran and as long as you keep in touch with the idea that you are going to return to Allah and give an account of your actions, so you will stay on the right path. You don't need any other training programme or another `person' to guide you. These two *murshids* are enough and everyone has them at his disposal.

D. Dua

Dua, supplicating to Allah, is `the spirit of *ibada*.' (*Tirmidhi*.) Indeed, it is a demand of Islam. The Prophet has exhorted us: `Allah is angry with him who does not ask [anything] from Him.' (*Tirmidhi*)

Each of your *duas* must capture the spirit of your goals and ambitions. You must offer them with humility and sincerity. The Prophet Muhammad has taught us some of the most beautiful supplications - said in beautiful words, encapsulating beautiful ideas, through beautiful ways of asking. Reflect upon the following *dua* as an example:

I am Your servant, I am at Your door. I am a poor man, I am at Your door. I am a helpless man, I am at Your door. I am a sinner, I am at Your door. I am Your guest, You invited me to come, I am at Your door. So have mercy on me.

There are many similar *duas* that move the heart and make tears flow from one's eyes. Additionally, there are *duas* that were part of the Prophet's daily routine: Prayers said while eating, drinking, sleeping, entering and leaving home. All of these *duas* must be memorised and utilised, for they remind us of Allah and His Omniscience.

But how exactly can these duas be used by us to remember Allah? Allow me to share with you one method, which can be utilised on a daily basis. The Prophet Muhammad taught us in one *hadith*:

After performing the dawn [*Subh*] Prayer, before you utter another word, say: O Allah, save me from Hell-fire [*Allahumma ajirni min an-nar*], seven times. If you die that day, Allah will decree that you be saved from Hell-fire. After performing the sunset [*Maghrib*] Prayer, before you utter another word, say: O Allah, save me from Hell-fire, seven times. If you die that night, Allah will decree that you be saved from Hell-fire- (*Abu Dawud*.)

Whenever I recite this *dua*, I use a method of recitation and reflection which helps me remember the final meeting with my Lord. For each of the seven times I recite this *dua*, I reflect on one of the stages from the Quran of the *Akhira*: the time of death; the sojourn and questioning by the angel in the grave; the time of rising and standing before Allah; the time of giving an account of all that has been done and seeing our actions displayed before us; and the passage over the *Sirat* or Bridge, then entering either Paradise or Hell.

All of these are stages of the journey. Each time that I bring to my mind one of those stages, even for the briefest moment, I supplicate to Him: `O Allah save me from the fire'.

This exercise in supplication takes me about five minutes after both *Salat al-Fajr* and *Salat al-Maghrib*. There is, however, no prescribed format to follow. You can select and form your own short course of *duas* based on the Prophetic traditions and use this as part of the regular way in which you remember Allah.

Finally, it is important for us to observe the etiquette of *dua* so that we may derive maximum benefit from them. These have been beautifully summarised by Imam al-Nawawi, where he lists ten prime conditions and dispositions that we should observe:

- Seek out the blessed times of Prayer: The Day of the Standing on the plain of Arafat [during *Hajj*]; the month of fasting [*Ramadan*]; Fridays [days of congregational prayers]; and during the night [especially the last third of it].

- Seek out the blessed moments for Prayer when the heart is receptive and tender: immediately after the five daily prescribed Prayers; between the call to Prayer (*adhan*) and the final call to Prayer (*iqama*); when breaking fast; while on the field of battle; when rainfall occurs; and when bowing down [*sujud*] in Prayer, for the Prophet said, `The worshipper is closest to his Lord while bowing down. So pray much then.' (*Muslim*.)

- Face the direction of Makka and raise the hands [with palms spread upward] to the level of the shoulders.

- Voice supplications in a moderate tone that is neither too loud nor too soft.

- Prayers need not be said in a forced rhymed prose [an often natural form in Arabic].

- Implore God with humility and reverence.

- Be fervent in Prayer and optimistic of the answer. Sufyan ibn Uyayna stated: What a person knows of himself should never stop him from supplicating to God for He answered the most evil creatures, Iblis [Shaytan], when he said, `*Give me respite until the Day they are resurrected. God said, You are of the respired ones.*' [al-Araf 7: 14.]

- Repeat requests, preferably three times, and don't be impatient or despondent in waiting for an answer.

- Begin supplication with the mention of God [His Names, praises and attributes] before asking of Him, and entreat God to send His blessings and peace upon the Prophet.

- Strive for inner purity with repentance and sincere devotion.

E. Istighfar and tawba

The process of *dhikr* must involve the recognition and confession of our faults, mistakes and aberrations and turning to Allah in asking for forgiveness with the expectation of his *rahma* or mercy. *Istighfar* is seeking forgiveness while *tawba* is taming away from our faults and returning to Allah, to His Path. When Allah desires good for a Believer, He gives him awareness of his faults. The Messenger of Allah when questioned about the nature of virtue and sin replied: `Virtue is to have good morals, sin is what pricks your heart and you dislike what people come to know about it.' (*Muslim*.) Likewise, whenever we are faced with a dilemma or uncertainty in our daily life we have been exhorted by the Prophet to observe the following guidelines:

Seek a verdict from your heart Virtue is that which your soul and heart feel satisfied with. Sin is that which troubles the soul and about which the heart is uneasy and confused, even though people may give their legal opinions in its favour. (*Muslim*.)

But what exactly does the process of *istighfar* and *tawba* entail? Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once saw a Bedouin repeating words of repentance in a great hurry. `This is fake repentance', remarked Ali ibn Abi Talib. The Bedouin asked, `What is true repentance?' Ali ibn Abi Talib explained that there are six elements in an act of true repentance:

- You should regret what has happened.
- You should discharge the duty which you have neglected.
- You should restore the right that you have misappropriated.
- You should apologise to the one whom you have caused injury.
- You should resolve not to repeat the act.
- You should dedicate yourself entirely to the service of Allah so that you may experience the rigours of obedience as you may have relished the pleasure of transgression.

We may now ask the question - when is the best time during the course of the day to perform *istighfar*? There is of course no special time to seek the forgiveness of Allah. But perhaps one of the best occasions is the early hours of each day which the Quran declares is the time utilised by true Believers to draw closer to their Lord: *they forsake their beds to cry unto their Lord in fear and hope.* [as-Sajda 32: 16.] The significance of this early part of each day has also been explained by the Prophet as follows:

Our Lord descends every night to the nearest Heaven when only the last third of the night remains, and says: `Is anyone praying that I may answer him? Is anyone seeking forgiveness that I may forgive him? Is anyone asking that I may give to him?' And this continues until dawn. (*Tirmidhi*.)

You should therefore start each day by taking an account of yourself: seek forgiveness for the wrongs you have done and make the intention not to repeat these mistakes. In this way you shall become free from these sins. Every day you may commit a sin, but if every day you come sincerely to Allah, then every day He will forgive you. Such is His love and blessings for us. Allah reminds us:

When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close [to them]. I listen to the prayer of

every supplicant when he calls on Me. Let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me so that they may walk in the right way. [al-Baqara 2: 186.]

While seeking the forgiveness of Allah, you must place your full trust and confidence in Allah for He always listens and answers the Prayers of His servants. In one *hadith qudsi*, Allah has reassured us:

Son of Adam, so long as you keep calling upon Me and hoping for good from Me, I shall forgive you whatever you have done, and I do not mind. Son of Adam, were your sins to rise as high as the sky, and were you to ask Me for forgiveness, I would forgive you. Son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins as large as would fill the earth, and meet Me having ascribed no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness as great as your sins. (*Tirmidhi*.)

4. Methods of Collective Dhikr

A. Seeking the company of the righteous

Dhikr can also be performed collectively. The Prophet told us that the *baraka* or blessing of Allah is with those who gather and work as a unified *jama'a* for the cause of Islam: 'Allah's hand is upon the *jama'a*.' (*Tirmidhi*.) Indeed engaging in remembrance of Allah collectively is encouraged in many *ahadith*. The Prophet is reported to have said:

If a group of people sit together remembering Allah, the angels will circle them, mercy will shroud them, peace will descend onto them and Allah will remember them among those with Him. (*Muslim*.)

Dhikr in a group may help teach those who do not know the desired *adhkar* and bring hearts together and strengthen their noble ties. To ensure that our company is always filled with remembrance of Allah, it is of paramount importance that we continuously seek the company of the righteous if we wish to be elevated in the eyes of Allah. Hasan al-Basri said in this regard:

Sit in the company of scholars. They will be pleased to see your virtues and will forgive your mistakes. They will not rebuke you when you commit mistakes; rather, they will provide clear guidance. When it is necessary to testify, they will bear true testimony to your advantage.

You must be careful with the selection of friends, for your companionship can and must be a form of *dhikr*. The Messenger of God said: `The best friend is the one who makes you remember Allah when you see him.' Also: 'Whosoever Allah wishes good for, He will grant him a righteous friend who will remind him if he forgets and aid him if he remembers'. And the Quran says: *Bind yourself with those who call upon Allah morning and evening*. [al-Kahf 18: 27-28.] As soon as you see the seed of *iman* planted in your heart and you recognise it in someone else's and you find that he agrees with you, you will feel ten times stronger. Social scientists have also discovered that group life is one of the most powerful forces to stimulate and improve the human being.

B. Witnessing Unto Mankind

Life can only be filled with *dhikr* if you strive and invite others to the path of Allah, the same path that you have found. This is a necessary outcome of your faith in Allah. The Quran advises: *Make it* [the truth] *known to mankind, and do not conceal it!* [Ali Imran 3: 187] *Help one another to righteousness and taqwa and do not help one another to sin and transgression.* [al-Maida 5:2] *Encourage one another in the truth, and encourage one another in patience* [al-Asr 103: 3.] *Remind* [others of the truth] *in the event that this admonition profits. Tire reminder will be received by he who stands in awe* [of God]. [al-Ala 87: 9-10.]

As your *iman* increases, you will yearn to share with everybody what you think and know is right and call upon them to join your mission and the *jama'a* for *who is better in speech than one who calls to God acts righteously and says: I am of those who surrender* [unto Him].' [al-Fussilat 41: 33.] Moreover, as the *jama'a* grows, your commitment to Allah will grow as well, each reinforcing the other. That is how the whole of life will become integrated in finding a path to Allah.

ORGANISING YOUR DHIKR

To benefit fully from all of the specific methods of *dhikr* whether individual or collective that we have discussed, you must strive to implement them in a daily programme of devotions, study and reflection. Set aside some periods each day to devote yourself completely to these tasks and do not allow anything to interfere with them. Spending even a small amount of time each day will bring within you a feeling of closeness to Allah and familiarity with His *Din* or way of life.

You should begin each day with some *dhikr* after *Salat al-Fajr* and make the intention that your whole day will be spent in serving Allah. Follow up the *dhikr* with a *dua* seeking provisions for the day. Allah Himself has exhorted us in the Quran:

O you who believe, celebrate the praises of Allah and do so often; Glorify Him in the morning and the evening. [al-Ahzab 33:41.]

After the *dhikr* and *dua* spend some time reciting, memorising and studying passages from the Quran for *indeed the reading* [of the Quran] *at Fajr as witnessed*. [al-Isra 17:78] If it is not possible to perform this task just after your *Fajr* Prayer then you may do it later, but you should make an effort to ensure that no day passes by without at least some reading and study of the Quran. Allocate some time also to study from a comprehensive syllabus which covers all the major aspects of Islam including Quran and *hadith* sciences, *Sharia* or Islamic law, *Fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence, *Sira* or the life history of the Prophet Muhammad and Islamic history.

Perhaps the best way to learn about Islam is to learn from those who have more knowledge than you. You should therefore strive to attend Islamic study circle sessions, camps and courses whenever you can. At the same time, as much as you learn and improve your understanding of Islam, do not forget your obligations towards your family and those around you. Set aside a period also to teach them about Islam.

As night falls just after the *Salat al-Maghrib*, it is again recommended to make *dhikr*, seeking protection for the coming night. And then to complete the day, just before retiring, reflect on what you have accomplished - where you have succeeded and where you have failed. As for your successes thank Allah that He has enabled you to do whatever you may have accomplished. For your failures, you must ask for His forgiveness with humility and sincerity. Close the day with Prayers for help and guidance to overcome your weaknesses and to develop your strengths.

SUMMARY

Your salvation and true success lies in the purification of your heart. The key to gaining a sound heart is remembrance of Allah.

There are basically two forms of *dhikr*. The first involves continuous and sustained inner awareness of Allah in all that we say and do in our daily lives through development of certain states of consciousness. They include a continuous realisation that Allah knows everything, that everything you possess has been given to you by Him; that He has power and control over everything; and ultimately, that you are going to return to Him. The second involves specific methods of *dhikr,* some of which may be performed individually and others which must be done collectively. Each of these

specific methods helps to develop the other. When they are implemented in an organised programme of daily devotions, they will, *Insha Allah*, lead to a life of continuous remembrance of Allah.

May Allah enable us all to remember Him often and much and may He enable our hearts to find the satisfaction that we seek for *without doubt in the remembrance of Allah hearts do find satisfaction*. [ar-Rad 13:38.]

CHAPTER THREE: Relating to Allah

EACH day in our *Salat*, we repeatedly make one humble request to Allah, our Creator and Sustainer: `Guide us the Straight Way.' (al-Fatiha 1:4) It is only by seeking and staying on the Straight Way, that we can ever hope to attain true salvation and success. What then must we do to ensure that Allah accepts and grants our Prayer? The Quran explains: Whosoever holds on to Allah, he has already been guided onto a Straight Way. [Al-Imran 3:101]

CHARACTERISTICS OF `HOLDING ONTO ALLAH'

What exactly is *itisam billah* or `holding onto Allah'? How do we develop a close attachment to and a close relationship with Allah? Let us explore the answers to these questions by reflecting upon the characteristics needed to `hold onto Allah' and thus be among those who are shown the *Sirat al-Mustaqim* or the Straight Way.

1. Thankfulness to Allah

The first characteristic is being ever grateful and thankful to Allah for everything that you possess including your wealth, health, status, intellectual abilities and life. You should recognise that your very existence and your continuing sustenance are dependent on Allah. Whatever praise is due, therefore, it is due to Him alone, for nobody has the power or the resources to give you anything except by His will. His bounties and blessings are countless. Allah says:

Is, then, He who creates comparable to any that cannot create? Will you not, then, take heed? For should you try to count Allah's blessings, you could never compute them. Allah is, indeed, All forgiving, All compassionate; and Allah knows all that you keep secret as well as all that you bring into the open. [an-Nahl 16:17-19]

It is for this reason that Allah commanded the Prophet Ibrahim to say: *It is He who has created me, and so it is He who guides me; it is He who gives me to eat and drink, and whenever I am sick it is He who heals me; and it is He who makes me die and then will bring me to life. And upon Him, I pin my hope that He would forgive my sins on the Day of Judgment.* [ash-Shuara 26:77-82.]

In many places in the Quran, Allah compares the terms *shukr* and *kufr*. [al-Baqara 2:152, Luqman 31: 12]. *Iman* implies *shukr* or gratefulness as opposed to *kufr* or ungratefulness. A *kafir* or unbeliever is ungrateful to the Being who has given him everything, whereas a *mumin* or Believer is one who is ever thankful for all that Allah has given him, for he recognises that *his Lord is Merciful and Loving*. [Hud 11:90.]

Iman, therefore, requires due praise and thanks to Allah. If you are ungrateful, Allah is unaffected. If you become grateful, then you have taken the first step towards becoming a true Believer. It is for this reason that the Prophet exhorted us to `love Allah as we benefit from His grace'. (*Tirmidhi*.)

In every moment and in every situation we see our Creator and Sustainer actively involved. He has

not retired from this world. He is on His throne creating, distributing and administering everything. He governs and sustains all in the Universe. Not even a leaf can fall without His knowledge, His permission and His command. The Quran declares:

He knows all that enters the earth and all that emerges therefrom, and that which comes down from the sky and all that ascends therein; and He is with you wherever you may be. [al-Hadid 57: 4.]

Everything that happens to us - even events that we may consider to be personal afflictions or natural disasters-'are from Him. So even in times of calamity and distress, there will be some good for us, provided we respond appropriately. The Prophet said:

How wonderful is the case of a Believer! There is good for him in whatever happens to him -and none, apart from him, enjoys this blessing. If he receives some bounty, he is grateful to Allah and this bounty brings good to him. And if some adversity befalls him, he is patient, and this affliction, too, brings good to him. (*Muslim*.)

Look again at the Quran, you will see that the very first introduction to Allah is *ar-Rahman ar-Rahim*. [al-Fatiha 1:1.] Allah Himself is saying that He is the Most Merciful, He is the Most Compassionate. He shows and gives mercy to all, even those who continue to be ungrateful and rebellious towards Him: *Indeed God is the possessor of bounty for all people but most people do not give thanks*. [al-Baqara 2: 243.]

Reflect upon your own life and you will find innumerable occasions when Allah's `hand' has been holding you and helping you. So often, we subconsciously use the expression `thank God for this and that', without realising the full implications of our words. The Quran even reminded the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, that in his early life, Allah's `hand' was holding him and guiding him:

Did He not find you an orphan and gave you shelter [and care]? *And He found you wandering and He gave you guidance. And He found you in need and made you independent. Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness, nor repulse him who asks*. [ad-Duha 93: 6-10.]

This exhortation is not only for the Prophet but for all people. From the moment that we open our eyes in this world until the moment our souls leave our bodies, and even beyond, Allah's mercy, compassion and protection remain with us. Continuously remind yourself then that your entire existence is dependent on Him. He is your Lord and Sustainer. He is nourishing and sustaining all that exists. From morning until evening, your tongue must be moist with continuous praise of Allah. In return, Allah has promised increased *rahma* or mercy for you: *If you are grateful, I will surely give you more and more*. [Ibrahim 14:7]

This is the cornerstone of your faith and the Islamic way of life. If you learn this first lesson, you will begin the process of `holding onto Allah'. *And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for the benefit of his own self.* [Luqman 31:12] *for surely if it was not for the grace of God on you and His mercy, you would have been among the losers.* [al-Baqara 2:64].

2. Worshipping Allah

Out of that sense of receiving everything from Allah, comes another important character trait of those who `hold onto Allah' exclusive worship of Allah. The Quran states that true *taqwa* cannot be attained until all your actions in life are done exclusively to earn the pleasure of Allah:

O mankind, worship your Lord alone, who has created you and those before you, so that you may attain taqwa or righteousness. [al-Baqara 2:21]

You must ensure that your *qalb* or heart submits totally and wholeheartedly to the Creator. Allah says: *O you who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly, without reservation. [al-Baqara 2: 208.] The only* [true] *way in the sight of Allah is Islam* [submission to the will of God]. [Ali Imran 3: 85.]

Your *qalb* cannot be compartmentalised. You cannot dedicate one piece of it to Allah and another to some other god, like wealth, status, career, spouse and so on.

There is a beautiful verse in the Quran which throws light on the absurdity of such a situation. It tells about some of the *mushrikin* or idol worshippers who sacrifice animals and then say that one part of the animal is for Allah and another is for their idols. The verse then states quite clearly that whatever is assigned to Allah is also, in reality, assigned to the idols, for Allah does not accept something divided between Him and others. He is One, indivisible and wants the human being to be undivided in service to Him. So long as our heart lies in a hundred places, so long as our eyes are set in a hundred directions, so long as we have many loyalties, we shall never be able to achieve that condition of 'holding onto Allah'.

Why should we allow divided loyalties to capture parts of our heart? Nothing in this world is going to be of use to us when we breathe our last, however hard we may have striven for it and however valuable it may seem to us. We must recognise that the prizes we seek are not the worldly possessions received from human beings like ourselves. It is only our Creator who can put a real value on our striving and bestow on us a real reward. *Shall I tell you of a business that will deliver you from a tormenting punishment?* [as-Saff 61:10] This 'business' amounts to you committing your whole undivided being to Allah alone, and selling yourself in order to earn His pleasure.

Sincerity in Worship

What does it mean to do everything *fi sabilillah*, for the sake of Allah, which should be the crux and substance of our lives? People are in the habit of classifying life's activities into those which are mundane and those which are religious. Remember, though, only those things done for the sake of Allah are the 'religious' things. Everything that is done for other than Allah however 'religious' it may seem - is a worldly act. If a person prays ostentatiously, it is a worldly act; if he fasts to expose his spirituality it is a worldly act; but if he earns thousands of pounds to support his family and to spend for the cause of Islam, seeking only Allah's pleasure, it is a highly spiritual act. The Prophet reminded us:

Many people fast but gain nothing from their fasting except hunger and thirst; and many people pray all night but gain nothing from their night Prayers except sleeplessness. (*Darimi*.)

What is of most importance to us is not the outward form of our actions. Although we perform all our duties and conform to all the protocols, it is the sincerity of purpose and intention behind our actions that really matters. The Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, emphatically stated: 'Actions are judged only by intentions and everyone shall have what he intended.' (*Bukhari, Muslim*.)

Remember that purpose and intention are like the soul of a body or the inner capability of a seed. Many seeds look alike, but as they begin to grow and bear fruit, their differences become manifest. The purer and higher the motive, the greater the value and yield of your efforts. For all your daily actions, remind yourself of the motives behind your deeds. This may be the best way to ensure the purity and exclusiveness of purpose and intention.

3. Love of Allah

The next character trait of those who 'hold onto Allah' is that they love Allah. The Quran says that those who have *iman*, love Allah more than anything else. [al-Baqara 2:165.] It does not say that one must love only Allah. Love is a blessing given to us by Allah and is manifested in many aspects of life. In Islam, however, it must be foremost for Allah, our Creator and Sustainer.

What is love? Perhaps it cannot be defined in terms which adequately reflect its nature and importance in a person's life. It is not possible to define it by a formula in a manner we define a scientific fact. But still each one of us knows what love is and can tell from our own experience the powerful force that it is. It is the overpowering force in life. It captivates you, it grips you, it moves you and you are prepared to do anything for the sake of it. Once love is there, what you do is not something which has to be imposed upon you, because you need imposition only for the things you do not love. *Iman* is something which must penetrate deep into your heart and generate love for Allah and His Prophet more than anything else. Unless this happens, you cannot experience the real *iman*.

To develop this love for Allah does not require us to retire to or seclude ourselves in a monastery. This love makes us do our duty to Allah while we are out in the street, at home or in the office. With this love, we live as servants of Allah everywhere, willingly making every sacrifice required of us. In fact, it propels us to share actively in the service of Allah's other creatures. True love of Allah makes us care for people and their needs.

Whether or not you have that love is something for you to examine closely. If you love someone, one of your most intense desires will be to get closer to that person. In Islam, you have a way in which you can get closer to Allah and talk to Him and that way is through *Salat*. The Prophet said that when a person performs *Salat*, he actually comes nearer to Allah and talks to Him. If you look at how you pray five times a day, you will have a barometer in your hand to find out how much you love Allah.

Once you are praying to Him, you are in front of Him, you are near to Him, you are talking to Him, you are responding to Him in gratitude and you are asking for His forgiveness. Prayer is not just a ritual in which you go through certain postures. The soul has to surrender itself exclusively to Allah and love Him. This love is like a seed which, as it grows, envelops the entire personality.

Ihsan - The Essence of Worship

To entice us to remember Him and to love Him even more, Allah has used the beautiful words in the Quran: *Wajh Allah* or the Face of Allah. He says:

All that is on earth will perish, but the Face of your Lord will abide forever - Full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour. [ar-Rahman 55:26-27]

Everything on this earth will perish except the `Face' of your Lord. His is the `Face' you must desire. The expression `Face of Allah' does not, of course, mean that Allah has a face like ours. But, again, if you love someone, you desire to look upon his face all the time, you always want to be in his company and you will make all the necessary sacrifices to earn his pleasure. So, when the Quran

uses the expression `Face of Allah' it is really to make us conscious that Allah is looking at us and we should do the things which will please Him and abstain from things which will displease Him. Thus, when the Prophet was questioned about the true meaning of *ihsan*, he replied:

Ihsan is that you worship and serve Allah as though you are seeing Him; for even though you do not see Him, He surely sees you. (*Bukhari, Muslim*.)

If you continuously remind yourself that Allah is looking at you when you are praying, when you are studying, when you are doing your job, when you are with your family and friends, when you are involved in *dawa* - then you are well on your way to attaining *ihsan,* the most excellent form of worship. *Ihsan* takes us to the highest station of nearness to Allah. This is what gives real worth to everything we do and makes our actions acceptable in the eyes of our Creator and Sustainer.

4. Becoming Hanif

Those who `hold onto Allah' must also strive to become *hanif* Literally translated, it refers to one who is inclined or one who cuts himself away from everything that is false and belongs only to Allah. The term is used in the Quran in ten places, six times with reference to the Prophet Ibrahim, on whom be peace, and the rest for any one who is sincere and sound in faith. The term connotes sincerity, uprightness and single-mindedness in one's dedication and commitment to Allah.

A. The model of Ibrahim

The example of a *hanif* is beautifully expressed in the life of Prophet Ibrahim, on whom be peace. Let us ponder upon two of his outstanding qualities.

B. Love for Allah

Ibrahim loved Allah. He forsook all loyalties and obedience to any object other than Allah. He said: '*I have turned my face* [my entire being] *to Him who is the Creator of the heavens and earth, having turned away from all else.'* [al-Anam 6: 79.]

He brought his entire life and being under Allah's rule, ensuring that he worshipped Him with heart and body. Ibrahim understood that Allah must rule everywhere: in homes as well as in hearts, in manners as well as in minds, in public life as in private. For him, the decision to surrender was personal and free. A ceaseless striving towards that end became the substance of his life so much so that Allah endowed him with the worthy title, *Khalil Allah* or Friend of God. [an-Nisa 4: 125] With utmost devotion and concentration, Ibrahim supplicated:

My Prayer and all my acts of worship, my living and my dying are for Allah alone, the Lord of all the worlds. He has no associate: Thus I have been commanded and I am foremost among those who surrender themselves unto Him. [al-Anam 6:162].

C. Complete trust in Allah

Ibrahim was tried and tested in every, conceivable way. Whenever His Lord called upon him to surrender, he would readily respond: `*I surrender to the Lord of all the worlds*.' [al-Baqara 2:131] `If you want me to go into the fire and be burnt alive, 1 am ready for that! If you want me to leave my home, I am ready for that! If you want me to take my son and wife and put them in a place where there is no shelter, no food and no one to protect them, I am ready for that! And if you want me to make the supreme sacrifice and put a knife to the throat of that which I love best, my son, I am ready for that!'

It is following his footsteps that millions of people go to the *Baytullah*, the House of Allah, during the Hajj echoing the words of Ibrahim:

Here I am, O Lord, here I am!
Here I am; no partner hast Thou; here 1 am!
Surely to Thee is all Praise, all Goodness and all Sovereignty;
No partner has Thou!

Labbayk! Allahumma Labbayk! I am here! O Allah I am at Your command! I am always at your command! I am always ready to surrender! I am always ready to sacrifice!

Ibrahim accepted Allah as the only Lord and the only source of guidance. He had absolute conviction in the commandments of Allah. He was prepared to surrender and sacrifice everything at a moment's notice without any hesitation whatsoever. His *tawakkul* or trust in Allah was absolute. His example is reminiscent of the verse in the Quran: *If anyone puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is* [Allah] *for him.* [at-Talaq 65:3]

To become true servants of Allah, we must continuously echo and abide by the words of the Quran: *Hasbunallah wa nimal Wakil [Allah is sufficient for us and He is the best Provider]* [Al-Imran 3:173] in every circumstance of our lives.

To become a *hanif*, as exemplified in the life of the Prophet Ibrahim, on whom be peace, you must love Allah as he did, everything in life must be done to please Allah and you must trust and rely on Allah completely:

To each is a goal to which Allah turns him: So strive together as in a race towards all that is good. [al-Baqara 2:148.]

5. Jihad- Striving in the Path of Allah

The next characteristic of `holding onto Allah' is to strive with all the means at your disposal to make the Word of Allah supreme within your heart and in the hearts of those around you. You must therefore bring all of mankind to Allah by witnessing to His guidance, *so that you be witnesses unto mankind and The Messenger be witness unto you.* [al-Baqara 2:143.]

In the *Sira*, we note that when the first ray of Divine Revelation reached Muhammad in Hira [al-Alaq 96: 1-5], the command of '*Iqra*' or Read was impregnated with world-shaking forces. He trembled. The second Revelation made things clear: *Arise and warn! And your Sustainer's greatness glorify!* [al-Muddaththir 74:2-3.] The Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, then took up his task with a single-minded dedication and encountered stiff opposition. The call to *let Allah be the Greatest* implied that all false claimants - and every claimant is false - to greatness, to unlimited power, authority and lordship to obedience, loyalty and servitude from Allah's creatures, must be challenged and dethroned. It is not difficult to see that this requires *hijra*, supreme sacrifices in `giving up' everything one loves and fighting with all that one possesses for the sake of that love of Allah which must be greater than all else. Allah says:

And strive hard in God's cause with all the striving that is due to Him. It is He who has elected you [to carry His Message] *and has laid no hardship on you in* [anything that pertains to] *religion* [and make you follow] *the need of your father Ibrahim.* [al-Hajj 22: 78]

The Believers are only those who [truly] *believe in Allah and His Messenger, and then they doubt not; and who struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah; it is they who are the truthful ones.* [al-Hujurat 49:15.]

A life of jihad necessarily requires important qualities: knowledge of and devotion to the Quran, *iman* or deep and strong faith, *sabr* or resolve and steadfastness. Read the Quran and you will find every promise of success here and in the Hereafter conditional upon these qualities.

A. Acquiring knowledge

In order to fulfill your mission in life as the *khalifa* or ambassador of Allah in the establishment of His way of life, you need to arm yourself with *ilm* or knowledge of Islam. The Prophet Muhammad has said: 'Whoever Allah wishes good for, He bestows upon him a deep understanding of the Din.' (*Bukhari, Muslim.*) The Quran also exhalts those who possess useful knowledge and use it as an instrument to develop their closeness to Allah: *Are those who know equal to those who do not? Only those with insight can keep it in mind* [az-Zumar 39:9]. *God will exalt those who believe among you and those who have knowledge to high ranks* [al-Mujadala 58:11]. *Of all His servants only those who know fear God.* [al-Fatir 35:28]. The Prophet also said that there are countless rewards both in this world and the Next for one who seeks to educate and purify himself:

If one travels in search of knowledge, Allah will make him travel to Paradise. The angels, being highly pleased with him, spread their wings over the seeker of knowledge. Everything in the heavens and on earth, even the fish in the depths of water, seek forgiveness for a scholar. And the superiority of a learned man over one engaged in ritual worship is like that of a full moon over the rest of the stars. (*Ahmad*)

Consider the following guidelines as you set out on the path to educate yourself.

- Seek to have a sound understanding of the Quran and *Sunna*. May Allah bless the renowned Islamic scholar al-Muhallab, who advised his children: Acquire knowledge before you become leaders so that leadership does not keep you preoccupied from acquiring knowledge. [Fathi Yakan, *Problems of the Dawa and the Daiya*, IIFSO, Kuwait, 1984. p. 71.]

- Try to improve your reading, writing and oratory skills.

- Be well versed in the issues of the day by reading current newspapers, magazines and journals.

- Strive to have a good understanding of contemporary issues and problems affecting society.

- Strive also to understand the problems of the Muslims in such depth as to develop your own solutions in the light of the Quran and Sunna.

- Develop a personal library even if it is a small one and most of all cherish your Islamic books.

B. Practicing what you preach

`Real' *iman,* once lodged in the heart and embedded at the centre of life, must flourish into a mighty tree of righteous deeds. True *iman* which resides in hearts, shapes lives, and finds acceptance with Allah is always differentiated in the Quran from outward, `legal' *islam*.

The Bedouins say, `We believe.' Say: you do not believe, rather say, We have surrendered; for [true] faith has not yet entered their hearts. [al-Hujurat 49:15.]

Similarly, mere verbal professions of faith, which are contradicted by actions, are rejected.

O Messenger, let not those grieve you who vie with one another in [the cause of] *kufr from among those who say `We believe' with their mouths, but their hearts believe not.* [al-Maida 5:41]

Even Believers are often called upon `to believe', that is, to attain true faith: *O Believers, believe in Allah and His Messenger, and the Book He sent down before*. [an-Nisa 4:136.] Or, *Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend out of that in which we have made you vicegerents*. [al-Hadid 57: 7.]

The connection between *iman* and actions is clearly manifest in the way both are almost always linked together: *al-ladhina amanu wa amilus-salihat* [those who believe and do righteous deeds].

The bond between true faith and ritual worship on the one hand, and a life lived totally in worship, which leads to justice and compassion in society on the other, is firmly established in many places in the Quran:

Have you seen him who denies Judgment? That is the one who repulses the orphan and urges not the feeding of the needy. Woe to those that pray and are unmindful of their Prayer, those who want to be seen, and who refuse small kindnesses. [al-Maun 107:1-5]

When we examine the body of *hadith* literature, we will also, immediately realise how the Prophet links a wide range of values and actions with *iman* in a very clear and defined manner. Just look at

some of them:

No one among you believes until all his desires follow what I have brought. (*Sharh al-Sunna*)

What lies between a man and *kufr* is the abandonment of Prayer. (*Muslim*.)

While one fornicates he is not a Believer, while one steals he is not a Believer, while one drinks he is not a Believer, while one takes plunder which makes men look at him he is not a Believer, and while one defrauds he is not a Believer. (*Bukhari, Muslim*.)

Flesh which has grown out of the unlawful earnings will not enter Paradise, for Hell is more fitting for all flesh which has grown out of the unlawful. (*Ahmad*)

Finally, remember that as a *daiya* or caller to Islam you need to set an excellent example and you need to practice what you preach. Those who do not follow their own advice have been strongly condemned by Allah. Keep close to you the following verses of the Quran:

O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Grievously hateful is it in the sight of Allah that you should say what you do not do. [as-Saff 61:2-3.]

Do you enjoin righteousness upon mankind while you yourselves forget [to practice it]? And you are readers of the Scripture/ Have you then no sense? [al-Baqara 2: 44.]

C. Developing patience and perseverance

There will be many obstacles and hardships that may prevent you from fulfilling your obligations to Allah and you therefore need to develop *sabr* or patience and perseverance. The Quran states: *So* [O Believers] *endure hardship with beautiful endurance*. [al-Ma'arij 70: 5] *So, patience is beautiful*. [Yusuf 12:84] *And God is with those who patiently persevere*. [al-Anfal 8: 66.]

Know that life is filled with tests and trials. Allah reminds us in the Quran:

Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, `We believe; and that they will not be tested? We did test those before them and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false. [al-Ankabut 29:2-3.]

The best of people therefore are those who bear their tests and trials with fortitude and optimism and who see in every difficulty an opportunity to turn to Allah in remembrance and prayer. Remind yourself constantly that *Allah shall make ease after hardship* [at-Talaq 65: 7], *and that on no soul does He place a burden greater than it can bear* [al-Araf 7: 42]. Remember that He has all the power. He gives everything. No harm can come to Him, and no benefit can come to Him. Everything that is happening in life is because of Him and comes from Him for no power is there save with Allah, the Most High, the Great.

IMPEDIMENTS IN `HOLDING ONTO ALLAH'

There are some character traits that you must take care to rid yourself of as you strive to `hold onto Allah'.

1. Pride

One such evil and impediment is *kibr* or pride. This represents the antithesis of humility and is a devastating moral ailment. The efforts which we make for *tazkiya*, it is hoped, will make us successful. But if one is successful, the greatest cancer that can eat everything away, is *kibr*. The Messenger of Allah said:

`No one will he admitted into Paradise who has even a tiny grain of pride in his heart.'
A man asked him: But what if someone likes to dress well and put on good sandals?'
He replied: `Truly Allah is beautiful, and He loves beauty. Pride is to disdain the truth, and to belittle and despise other people.' (*Muslim*.)

The day you feel that you have attained something special is the day of your spiritual death. Thus, the entire effort which you make should continue to be permeated with humility. Always remember that whatever you have achieved is by the grace of Allah, not through your own efforts.

Secondly, know that the ideal for you to emulate is the *uswa* of the Prophet. His example is so high and exalted: *And you [Muhammad] stand on an exalted standard of character*. [al-Qalam 68:4.] One of the reasons the `ideal' standard is so high, is to ensure that we always strive to better ourselves. If the ideal is easily reachable, then once a person has attained it, he will feel content, and contentment will set him off on a downward slide. Because our ideal is high, we are always in a state of aspiration. We are perpetually in a state of effort, striving and spiritual development. Should *kibr* arise in this state, it can only be an act of Shaytan, who is there just to test whatever one has achieved in the field of knowledge or action. *Kibr* will destroy whatever you have achieved, so protect yourself against it. Remember that it comes in very attractive, very concealed and very deceptive channels and forms. So, be ever vigilant.

The characteristics of a Believer whose heart is free of pride and filled with *ikhlas* and humility are described in a *hadith qudsi*. Allah Most High has said:

Truly, of those devoted to Me, the one I most favour is a believer who is of meagre means and much given to Prayer, who has been particular in the worship of his Lord and has obeyed Him inwardly, who was obscure among people and not pointed out, and whose sustenance was just sufficient to provide for him yet he bore this patiently.
Then he [i.e. the Prophet] rapped with his hand and said: Death will have come early to him, his mourners will have been few, his estate scant. (*Tirmidhi*.)

You should thus strive to become like one who doggedly keeps on working for the cause of Allah. You may not necessarily read details of him in newspaper columns, nor does he appear on television screens, nor does he win applause by making beautiful speeches in large gatherings and commendations for writing good pieces. He is not plagued by doubts. He does not waver in the face of defeat and failure. He does not calculate the chances of success but he knows very well that the only chance of success for him is to do his duty, and do it to the best of his ability. He is the

backbone of the Islamic work and the Muslim *Umma.*

2. Hypocrisy

Another evil that destroys all that the Believer has achieved, or is trying to achieve, is *nifaq*. *Nifaq* entails hypocrisy, showing off, and pretending to have what one does not possess. The Prophet condemned this in the strongest terms. He said:

Whoever prays to show off, he is [a sort of] idolater, for he makes a god beside Allah; whoever fasts to show off, he also makes a god beside Allah; and whoever gives charity to show off; he too makes a god beside Allah. (*Ahmad*.)

He also said:

Three characteristics are the signs of a hypocrite, even if he fasts, performs the Prayer and claims that he is a Muslim: when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he betrays his trust. (*Bukhari, Muslim*.)

Hypocrisy serves only to cloud your consciousness of Allah. It is a moral ailment which eats away one's character as a moth eats away cloth. *Nifaq* is the opposite of *ikhlas* whereas *ikhlas* is the most essential ingredient of faith and good deeds. You should therefore assess your motives and actions frequently.

3. Pessimism

A third danger is that of *qunut* or pessimism. You must try to rid yourself of *qunut*, the feeling of hopelessness and pessimism. Allah calls *qunut* an act of *kufr* or disbelief and rejection: He says: *who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, those who go astray*? [al-Hijr 15: 56.]

If you have tried and failed a hundred times, your efforts would still have won incalculable gains. The feeling of disappointment and pessimism and of losing heart should never occur. The promise of Allah is true and will come to pass: *And those who strive in Our way We will certainly guide them to Our paths*. [at-Ankabut 29:69.] Always adopt a hopeful and positive outlook. Be an eternal optimist.

4. Uncontrollable Anger

A fourth danger is that of uncontrollable anger. Once you begin to truly `hold onto Allah' you will find that life becomes pleasant and easy. To work for the cause of Islam becomes a joy. Inter-personal disputes, family problems and organisational problems will be resolved amicably. Most problems which persist in affecting our social relationships and organisations are due to lack of sincerity and lack of exclusiveness for Allah.

If you begin to do everything for Him, there is no need to be angry if somebody insults you since he or she cannot harm you at all. Only Allah's displeasure can harm you. Remember the words of Allah:

Never let your enmity for anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Always be just: that is closest to being God-fearing [al-Maida 5:8.]

Why should you become angry? Uncontrollable anger and unnecessary rudeness and disputes that

take place are counter productive especially when you are working in a *jama'a*, hand-in-hand with your fellow Muslim brother and sister for the cause of Islam. Remember that we are working only to seek the pleasure of Allah. Do not ruin your good deeds by corrupting your heart with *kibr* and letting your *nafs* or selfish desires get the better of you. Identifying a practical method of controlling anger, the Prophet advised:

When one of you gets angry while he is standing, he should sit down. Then the anger [will] leave him, and if not, then he should lie down. (*Ahmad, Tirmidhi*.)

The Prophet also used to make *dua* constantly in order to avoid negative emotions and behaviour:

O Allah. Purify my heart from hypocrisy and my actions from ostentation. (*Bukhari*.)

O Allah, Sustain me with Your love and the love of one who loves You, and the love of that which will draw me near to Your love, and make Your love more dear to me than cool water. (*Bukhari*,)

There are many more Prayers and supplications of the Prophet for similar things. They are food for the soul, food for the *qalb* and a source of sustenance for living this worldly life, for doing business. for studying, for working, for bringing up children and for dawn. Remember, if we do things for worldly objects, these objects will perish and our own actions will also perish.

The parable of those who reject their Lord is that their works are as ashes on which the wind blows furiously on a tempestuous day. No power have they over what they have earned. That is the straying far, far [from the goal]. [Ibrahim 14: 18]

5. Abuse of the Tongue

A fifth danger is abuse of the tongue. We should be careful how we use our tongue for its misuse is the fastest way to Hellfire. Lying, slandering, backbiting and obscenity should never be part of our speech. We should be exceedingly careful with what we say about others. The Prophet said:

None of my Companions should tell me anything about anyone, for I like to meet [any one] of you with a clean heart. (*Abu Dawud*.)

Janna has been promised for those who are careful with their speech. The Prophet said:

Whoever can promise me that he will be virtuous with what is between his lips, and what is between his thighs; I promise that he will go to the Garden. (*Muslim*.)

The key to control of the tongue is to infuse our conversations with remembrance of Allah. The Prophet said in this regard:

Do not talk for long without remembering Allah, for talking much without remembering Allah is hardness of the heart. The most distant among man from Allah is one with a hardened heart. (*Tirmidhi*.)

6. Lustful Sexual Passions

The sixth and last impediment I wish to highlight is that of lustful sexual passions. Sex is a powerful

driving force that Allah has blessed us with. In the Quran, Allah praises *men who guard their sex organs* [an-Nur 24: 30], and *women who guard their sex organs* [an-Nur 24: 31]. Despite great temptations, true Believers are able to control their sexual desires and in the process preserve their chastity.

The abuse of one's sexual organs leading to either fornication or adultery (*zina*) is described in the Quran as a great abomination:

Do not come near zina for it is a foulness and an evil way. [al-Isra 17: 32]

The verse warns against approaching any avenue which excites passions, opens ways for illicit relations between a man and woman, and promotes indecency and obscenity. For this reason we are advised by Allah and His Prophet to observe the following regulations:

- We should seek to get married if we are in a position to do so. The Prophet said: 'O young men! Those of you who can support a wife should marry, for it keeps you from looking at women and preserves your chastity.' (*Bukhari*.) If you are unable to get married, you should fast regularly for this will assist in controlling your sexual desires. The Prophet said: `O young men! You should marry. Whosoever cannot marry should fast, for fasting will lessen his desire'. (*Bukhari*.)

- We should strive to control all the parts of our body not just our genitals from *zina* or fornication. The Prophet said: `Every son of Adam has his share of fornication. The eyes fornicate and do so by looking. The hands fornicate and do so by touching. The feet fornicate and do so by walking [to an immoral act or place]. The mouth fornicates and does so by kissing. And the heart forms thoughts and wishes which the genitals confirm or deny.' (*Bukhari and Muslim*.) Thus the Prophet used to make *dua* continuously: `I seek refuge in Thee from the evil which may be in my ears, my eyes, my heart and my semen'. (*Abu Dawud*.)

- We should avoid looking at members of the opposite sex with desire. The Prophet considered lustful looks as the '*zina* of the eye', according to his saying: 'The eyes also commit *zina* and their *zina* is the lustful look' (*Bukhari*). He also said: 'A gaze is a poisoned arrow from Shaytan. Whoever abstains from it in fear of God shall receive from film an increase in faith, the sweetness of which he will feel in his heart.' (*Musnad* of *Ibn Hanbal*.)

- We should avoid looking at the *awra* or private parts of others. The Prophet forbade looking at the aura of another, whether of the same or the opposite sex, and whether with or without desire. He said: 'A man should not look at the *awra* of another man, nor a woman of a woman, nor should a man go under one cloth with another man, nor a woman with another woman. (*Muslim*.)

- We should observe the rule of *khalwa*. *Khalwa* or privacy denotes a man and woman being alone in a place in which there is no fear of intrusion by anyone else, so that an opportunity exists for sexual intimacy. Islam prohibits *khalwa* between a man and a woman who are outside the degree of *mahram* relationship. The reason for this is not a lack of trust but rather to protect ourselves from sexual temptation arising when we are alone with a member of the opposite sex. The Prophet said: `Whoever believes in God and the Last Day must never be in privacy with a woman without there being a *mahram* with her, for otherwise Shaytan will be the third present [with them].' (*Ahmad*.)

SUMMARY

The Quran has laid down certain guidelines for staying on the Straight Way. The first is to `hold on to Allah' and life's journey will be easy.

`Holding onto Allah' means that you must be grateful to Him for everything, worship only Him, love Him more than anything else, strive to become a *hanif,* and make jihad only for Him.

Likewise, be aware of the following impediments in `holding onto Allah': pride, hypocrisy, pessimism, uncontrollable anger, abuse of the tongue and lustful sexual passions.

May Allah guide us to the Straight Way for He guides whom He wills to the Straight Way. [Yunus 10:25.]

CHAPTER FOUR: `Relating to Allah's Messenger

THE Quran's major claim upon us is to put its teachings into practice for Allah demands the whole of our lives:

O you who have attained to faith! Surrender yourselves wholly unto God, and follow not Shaytan's footsteps, far, verily, he is your open foe. [al-Baqara 2: 208.]

The only way to live by the Quran is to live life as the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, lived it, for his life was the Quran in practice. His example is the surest guide to its meaning and Message. If you want to `see' the Quran then look at the Prophet's life. For, as Sayyida Aisha said, 'his conduct was nothing but the Quran.' (*Muslim*.)

The best way to understand the Quran and follow its Message is to learn what the Prophet said, spend hours and hours in his company, follow his footsteps and cast yourself in the mould that he left behind.

The Quran provides the essential framework for human life. But the Prophet and his *Sunna* provide us with the details of that framework. The manner in which that structure is to be given shape in actuality, the method to be adopted in order to live by Divine guidance, and the wisdom that enables one to rise to all occasions and live through all situations in accordance with Allah's guidance.

If you desire to know what type of person the Quran wants you to be and what type of society the Quran wants you to create, you only need to look at the Prophet's life history.

Knowing, however, is not enough. We require inner strength to follow the Quranic teachings. We need to have the real flavour of faith inside our hearts. This strength comes out of the love that a Believer must have for Allah and His Messenger. Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet said:

There are three types of people who will experience the sweetness of faith: he to whom Allah and His Messenger are dearer than all else; he who loves a human being for Allah's sake alone; and he who has as great abhorrence of returning to unbelief after Allah has rescued him from it as he has of being cast into hell. (*Bukhari, Muslim*.)

This love is not merely the profession of faith. It is a love that supersedes all other types of love and a love that makes faith penetrate into the heart. It is through this love for God and His Messenger that one tastes the real sweetness of faith. The way to that love and the symbol of that love lies in following the footsteps of the Prophet who was commanded by Allah to say:

If you love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, most Merciful. [Ali Imran 3:31]

THE POSITION OF THE SUNNA IN A BELIEVER'S LIFE

By the time the Prophet, peace be on him, departed this world, there were thousands of people whose lives mirrored his life. He left behind a society whose every aspect carried his stamp. His guidance, his teachings, his actions and his sayings not only fashioned that society during his time, but also continued to influence it after he had died. He created a new society and led the creation of a new civilisation and culture out of the teachings of the Quran. This he did in accordance with the task given to him by Allah Himself.

O Messenger! Convey all that has been sent to you from your Lord. If you did not you would not have delivered His Message. [al-Maida 5: 67]

THE PROPHETS MISSION

Muhammad, upon whom be peace, was not simply a `Messenger' who brought a `Message'. His responsibility and his task went beyond merely conveying the word of Allah to mankind. He was assigned the duty of teaching the Book, the Law, and the Wisdom to people, purifying them and making them develop into the human beings that the Quran desired them to be.

In many places in the Quran, these duties have been explicitly mentioned. In the very first part of *Sura al-Baqara*, Prophet Ibrahim, on whom be peace, prayed for a new Messenger:

Our Lord! Raise up in the midst of our offspring a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Your verses and instruct them in the Book and in Wisdom and purify their lives. Verily, You are Mighty, Wise. [al-Baqara 2:129]

In the above verse, four duties of the Prophet are mentioned:

-to convey the Message of the Quran to people;

-to instruct them in the Scripture which means the `code of law' for human life;

-to teach them wisdom, through which life can make its journey in the light of the Quranic teachings;

-to vain them in self-purification

His mission, therefore, was not merely to convey the Quran. He was designated to explain it and provide the guidance for day-to-day situations as the movement he led progressed from one stage to another.

In other places in the Quran, [See Quran: 33: 4-5; 5: 67; 2: 151; 48: 28; 9: 33; 61: 9; 7: 157.] Allah has described his mission and duty as:

-*Indhar* (warning)

-*Tabshir* (bringing glad tidings)

-*Dawa* (inviting and calling)

-*Tabligh* (communicating)

-*Tadhkir* (reminding)

-*Talim* (teaching)

-*Tilawa* (conveying and propagating)

-*Amr bil-maruf wa nahi anil munkar* (enjoining and promoting what is good and right and forbidding and eradicating what is bad and wrong)

-*Iqama* (establishing the *Din* or way of life)

-*Qist* (establishing justice)

-*Izhar* (making Divine guidance prevail)

-*Shahada* (witnessing)

All these expressions pertain to the same mission, though from different perspectives and with different emphases.

The Prophet was also given the authority to make things permissible and to make things prohibited: *Adopt what the Messenger gives you and refrain from what he prohibits you*. [al-Hashr 59: 7.] And he had this authority from none other than Allah.

It was to accomplish these duties assigned to him that the Prophet Muhammad spent his whole life in changing people's behaviour and establishing a new society. The Quran accords him a unique position which no one else can ever have. *Whoever obeys the Messenger, indeed, he has obeyed Allah*. [an-Nisa 4: 80.] *Those who gave their hands in pledge to you, indeed they gave their hands in pledge to Allah.* [al-Fath 48: 10.]

Once the Prophet has given his decision and his judgment, no believing man or woman has any right to question, doubt, disobey, or harbour any feeling of disapproval. They must submit totally and willingly to him.

It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger, to have any option about their decision. If any disobeys Allah, and His Messenger, he is, indeed, on a clearly wrong path. [al-Alazab 33: 36]

In the life of the Prophet, according to the Quran, lies the most beautiful and the most perfect example to follow:

You have, indeed, in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar, for whoever hopes for Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much. [al-Ahzab 33: 21.]

GUIDELINES IN STUDYING THE SUNNA

One may ask where can the *Sunna* be found for there are so many books and traditions circulated. What the Prophet has left behind however, is not merely a record of what be did or what he said. He left behind him living human beings and a living society. It is through these living human beings and through this society that one can find the *Sunna.* The degree of homogeneity, conformity, and consistency that you find in this *Umma*, even after 1,400 years, are because of this *Sunna*.

You may walk into any masjid from Indonesia to Washington and you will find the rites and rituals of the formal acts of worship and the language of Prayer almost identical. You may walk into any Muslim home and you will find every Muslim eating with his right hand. Why? Because that is the *Sunna* left behind by the Prophet.

These examples may seem trivial but my purpose in citing them is to point out that even on the minutest of details, uniformity exists in the Muslim *Umma* and this is due to the *Sunna*. If the *Sunna* is given up as a source of guidance and if the Quran is separated from the *Sunna*, then this Muslim society that has existed for over fourteen hundred years, through many periods of severe strains and tests and tribulations, would disintegrate. It would then be relatively easy for foreign cultures and societies to assimilate it. What gives Muslim society and Muslim communities a distinct identity and colour of their own is the pattern left behind by the Prophet.

THE SUNNA IN THE CONTEXT OF WESTERN SOCIETY

Muslims in Western societies live in a culture which is `alien' in its spirit. To live in this type of culture is your own choice and your own decision. In many instances, you have no other option for the West is your home. Unfortunately, the same can be said for people living in Muslim countries since Western culture is slowly weaving its way and replacing genuine Islamic culture in these countries also.

To survive and prosper in western society requires great courage to stand up for your beliefs and ideals. You need to have a clear appreciation of the true nature of Islamic culture. The true spirit of Islamic culture lies in an understanding that the 'real' realities of life are all beyond the perception of physical senses. The beginning of *Sura al-Baqara* states that its guidance is for: *Those who believe in al-ghayb* [what lies beyond the perception of physical senses). [al-Baetara 2:4]

So all that is 'real'-Allah, His Angels, Prophethood, the Day of Judgment, Heaven and Hell - are all beyond any measure of physical testing. They all lie beyond human capability to see them, to smell them, to measure them, or to find their real situation.

Western culture as it exists and as it has spread now throughout the world, in this 'global village', has perpetuated the view that, only that which can be materially measured or found out is 'real'. Whatever cannot be measured has no value. Therefore, both Islamic and western cultures are diametrically opposed.

Once you have chosen to live in a 'Western type' society, the only source of light for you is the Messenger of Allah. He was also faced with an almost similar situation. As he came down from the cave of Hira, after his experience of receiving the light of Divine guidance, be re-entered a culture

and society which were quite 'alien' to his Message. His Message began by linking the whole of life to the name of Allah. That was the starting point. All knowledge, all culture, all civilisation and all human action must be centred on one pivot and that is the name of Allah. This was a totally strange Message for the society in which he had to operate. So, we need to look at the Prophet's *Sunna* in the context of operating in an `alien' society and see how we can practise a genuine Islamic culture.

THE REAL MEANING OF THE TERM SUNNA

The technical definition of *Sunna* is all that the Prophet did, said, or approved. When the term *Sunna* is used, our minds are diverted immediately to the manners and morals which we are so careful to observe, while dressing and eating, walking and praying.

I have no intention of belittling the importance of these relatively minor acts that he left behind. It reminds me of a beautiful incident from his life. A man and his son came to meet the Prophet. As he came out of his house, the buttons of his shirt were open. Both of them shook his hand and went away. That was the only occasion in their lives when they came face to face with the Prophet. But, for their entire lives they always kept the buttons of their shirts open - not because it was obligatory, but once you fall in love with someone, each and every action that he does, and each and every thing that he says, becomes dear to the heart. It has to be followed.

If, however, you consider the technical definition of *Sunna*, and if you look at the life of the Prophet from the moment he received revelation in the cave of Hira till he breathed his last in Madina, what is it that stands out as his most dominant concern and his main activity? The most outstanding feature of his life was that every moment was spent in *dawa,* in inviting his fellow human beings to live in submission to their Creator. He lived

every moment of his life in purifying individuals and making them grow in their love and submission to Allah. Every moment of his life, he talked about and carried out his mission. In the streets of Makka, in the valley of Taif, on the battlegrounds of Badr and Hunayn, and to the totality of affairs of Madina - *dawa* was his essential concern. That was his essential *Sunna.*

YOUR MISSION

Dawa is the first and most important duty for Muslims today. In your daily affairs, it is the *Sunna* that must be uppermost in your mind and heart. It must make the greatest claim on your time and wealth.

Secondly, while living in an 'alien' culture, you have to preserve your Islamic identity - not only through rational arguments, but through emotional, cultural, and civilisational symbols. It is only the *Sunna* that can provide these emotional and civilisational symbols through which you will not only preserve your identity but strengthen and advance it.

Thirdly, it is the youth who must claim your major attention for that is also the *Sunna* of the Prophet. They were the people who had the energies and capabilities to carry the burden of his mission.

Fourthly, in a society where so many misgivings about Islam prevail, where Islam has been misrepresented and distorted so widely, your conduct must be a living example of that mercy to mankind, just as the Prophet was *rahmatun lil-alamin* a mercy to the worlds.

We sent you not but as a mercy for all the worlds. [al-Anbiva 21: 107.]

The Prophet Muhammad was such a model of mercy that he declared that removing an obstacle

from another's path leads one into Paradise; to quench the thirst of a dog entitles one to enter Paradise; and to tie a cat until he dies makes one deserve Hell-fire. Such was the mercy of his *uswa*, his living example. You will only be able to invite people to Islam if you follow his example.

SUMMARY

We must recognise the unique position that the Prophet must occupy in our lives as a focus of our love and obedience and as an ideal we must follow.

Our biggest challenge is to fulfill our role as ambassadors of the last Ambassador of Allah to mankind for all times. By our words and deeds, by our example of integrity and compassion, we must make our neighbours understand who Muhammad, peace be upon him, was and what his Message for mankind was.

In this process, we must be the embodiment of mercy that the Prophet was. In this way we will create a new future by making the new generation a living example of his *Sunna.* Then, perhaps, our presence in this world will prove a great blessing, not only for the Muslim community, but for all mankind.

CHAPTER FIVE: Spending in the Way of Allah

WHATEVER you give or spend in the way of Allah will be returned to you in manifold increase. Allah, the most Bountiful and the most Loving, commends:

Lend unto God a goodly loan. Whatever good you shall forward on your behalf you shall find it with God, as better and richer in reward. [al-Muzzammil 73: 20.]

Be generous, therefore, for whatever you spend on yourself is only for your temporary sustenance while whatever you spend in the way of Allah is an investment in your future for which will provide everlasting sustenance. Seek to invest in others for your own benefit with whatever Allah has endowed you.

Sadaqa or charity, of course, is not compulsory. What is obligatory, however, is *Zakat*, a fixed percentage of your *halal* or lawful savings which is meant to purify your wealth by recognising that the needy has a right over a portion of it. Indeed, the very meaning of the term *Zakat* signifies purification. Allah says: *Of their wealth take alms to purify and sanctify them*. [at-Tawba 9:103.] Furthermore: *He that spends his possessions* [on others] *so that he might grow in purity*. [al-Layl 92: 18.]

Love for worldly possessions is primarily a disease of the heart while the purpose of *sadaqa* is to act as its antidote or cure. *Sadaqa* serves as a form of *dhikr* to remind us that all forms of wealth come from Allah and what we possess is .simply a short term loan for which we will be held accountable

when our contract expires. This loan is meant to cater for our personal needs and family needs and those of the wider society.

SPENDING ON FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS

Spending on those in need is a highly commendable form of *ibada* or worship. The Prophet Muhammad declared:

A generous person is close to Allah, close to Paradise, close to people, and far from Hell. However, a miserly person is far from Allah, far from Paradise, far from people, but close to Hell. Allah loves more an ignorant man who is generous than a worshipper who is miserly. (*Tirmidhi*.)

We should not, of course, expect any favours from those who receive our *sadaqa*. Neither should we expect that they will be grateful and kind to us and give something to us in return, nor should we be motivated by a desire for any other worldly reward. Concerning our attitude to giving Allah reminds us: *O you who believe, make not your charity worthless by reminders of your generosity, and by causing vexation*. [at-Baqara 2: 264.] Our *sadaqa* should be *qard hasan*, a loan given for the sake of Allah without expectation of profit. The Quran describes the attitude of those who give to the needy as follows:

And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive [saying], *'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: No reward do we desire of you nor thank*,. [ad-Dahr 76: 8-9.]

Their reward is sought from Allah rather than mortals. And whose gratitude and return can be greater for us than Allah's, given out of love and mercy for us?

Instead of hoping for some worldly benefit from our *sadaqa*, we should be grateful to those who accept our *sadaqa*, for they have given us an opportunity to invest our wealth in a `business venture' with Allah who has promised in return a reward `seven hundred times greater'. *The parable of those who spend their wealth in the array of Allah is that of a grain, out of which grow seven ears, in every ear hundred grains*. [al-Baqara 2: 261.]

Just imagine if such an investment was offered to you by a company- you would rush to put every penny you possess into it when you consider the magnitude of profit to be made. To invest in Allah's `business venture' requires the certainty of faith, which affirms that there is a `real' reward available for you to receive. Of this reward, the Quran declares: *Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs* [in return] *is the Garden*. [at Tawba 9:111.]

When a Believer attains the certainty and faith that his real reward lies in the Life to Come, his heart becomes enlarged with generosity and love for his fellow men and his giving knows no bounds. In return, Allah promises ease for him in all his efforts until he reaches eternal bliss.

Surely, your striving is to diverse ends. And for him who gives, is God-conscious and believes are the Truth -for him shall We make easy the path towards ease. But, as for him who is niggardly, behaves as if he is self-sufficient and denies the Truth-for him shall We make easy the path towards hardship. [al-Layl 92:4-10.]

The Prophet, upon whom be peace, was the most generous person in his community. It was his

unique sense of generosity and affection which captivated the hearts of the people and brought them into the fold of Islam. His example was the most important form of *dawa*. Imam Bukhari has recorded that the close Companion of the Prophet, Jabir, testified that he never observed the Prophet refusing anyone who requested something from him. The Prophet, upon whom be peace, has himself testified: `If I had a mountain of gold, I would not like to save any of it for more than three days, except something I put aside to pay debts' (*Bukhari*). The magnanimity of the blessed Prophet is the example we must strive to follow.

SPENDING FOR THE CAUSE OF ISLAM

Spending on fellow human beings -family, relatives, the needy, the orphan, the destitute - is one aspect of *infaq fi sabilillah* or spending in the way of God. There is also another - that is, spending for the cause of Islam. When you spend for the cause of Islam, Allah adopts another manner of asking for it: *Who is there who will give a loan to Me?* [al-Hadid 57: 11.] Just imagine His generosity. It is His wealth, it belongs to Him. Even if He asks us for it without offering any reward, He will be justified in doing so but yet He is prepared to buy back His own property so that you may again reap its benefits and gain a noble reward.

Consider our attitude when we are asked to contribute for the cause of Islam. We are miserly. We will spend one-hundredth of what we spend on our homes, our children, our clothes and food for the cause of Islam. *Sura al-Hadid* goes on to invite those who clams to be Muslims to become true Believers and to give their lives and their possessions and belongings in the way of Allah. Finally, it invites Muslims to give a good loan to Allah which he will multiply many times and return with a noble reward:

One day we shall see the believing men and believing women with their Light running before them and on their right A glad tiding for you today, gardens underneath which rivers flow, therein to abide forever. This a the supreme triumph.

On that day hypocrites, both men and women, shall speak unto those Believers; `Wait for us. Let us have light from your light.' But they will be told: `Turn back and seek a light of your own.' And thereupon a wall will be raised between them with a gate in it. Inside it will be mercy and outside the wall will be suffering and punishment.

Those who will be outside will call out to those who -would be inside `Were we not with you?' To which the others will answer: Yes, indeed, but you allowed yourself to be tempted and you were hesitant and you were in doubt and your wishful thinking

deceived you until Allah's command came to pass. For, indeed the deceiver deceived you concerning Allah. And so, no ransom shall be accepted today from you and neither from those who disbelieved Your abode is the fire. It is your only refuge, and how evil a journey's end. '

Is it not time that the hearts of all those who have believed should feel humbled at the remembrance of Allah and of all the truth that has been given to them, lest they become like those who were granted revelation before and whose hearts have hardened with the passage of time, so that many of them have now become Iniquitous?

But, know that Allah gives life to the earth after it has been lifeless! We have, indeed, made Our Messages clear unto you, so that you might use your reason.

Verily, as for men and women who accept the Truth as true, and who offer up unto Allah a goodly loan, they will be amply repaid, and shall have a noble reward [in the Life to Come]. [al-Hadid 57: 12-18]

The above verses describe a vivid and graphic scene concerning the Last Day, *Yawm al-Qiyama*. It concerns two groups of people, those who are true Believers and those who are shaky, hesitant and

doubtful in their commitment to their faith and to our Creator.

The first verse describes the group of believing men and women. They will have a *Nur* or Light which will be in front of them and on their right. With that Light they will journey to their destination and they will be greeted with glad tidings of beautiful gardens in which they will live forever- that will be the highest possible achievement for which they can hope.

The first point we may note is that both men and women are mentioned in the verse separately. This means that as far as the demands and duties of this world and eligibility for the rewards in the Life to Come are concerned, there is no difference between men and women. Both men and women will possess the Light for their journey.

Then, the Quran focuses the narrative on the second group, the hypocrites and miserly ones - both men and women -who will not possess the Light. Those who were niggardly and did not believe in the promises made by Allah will cry out to the true Believers for their bounty - but, it will be too late to benefit from the generosity of others. A wall will arise separating the generous ones from the miserly. The generous ones will find shelter in Allah's *rahma*, while the miserly ones and the hypocrites will be on the side of Allah's wrath. A dialogue will then commence between the two groups. Ibn Kathir elaborates the conversation in a very vivid manner. The miserly and the hypocrites will be saying:

`Were we not with you? Did we not go with you to the Friday Prayers? And did we not attend with you the congregations? And did we not do other things with you? Did we not fight side by side with you in the battles? So, why are you now leaving us behind?' The true Believers will reply, `Yes, indeed, you were with us. But you were with us only outwardly, with your bodies, but not with your intentions and with your commitments. And you allowed yourselves to be tempted away by these worldly things which you considered to be dearer, more valuable for you in life. You were more concerned about your families, you were more concerned about amassing wealth, you were more concerned about making life comfortable and you were more concerned about building up a good life in the world. And so, all these worldly things, once they became the medium and vehicle for taking you away from the Right Path, led you to this position. And you waited and you hesitated'.

If we reflect on the whole scene, we will find that there is mention of a gate in the wall. If we believe that all that is going to happen in the *Akhira* is a result of what happens today, it means that although there is a wall which separates the sincere from the insincere, and the true Believers from the hypocrites-there is always a door between the two groups that can be opened.

If, today, someone makes a decision to step inside that door it requires two things: a will and a step, and then you are inside, near the mercy of Allah. The time to walk through that door is today and not tomorrow, because tomorrow that door may not be open. But today, despite all the walls that may separate the sincere from the insincere and the generous from the miserly, the door for *istighfar* and *tawba* is open. The door for turning back is open and the door to make a decision and so become sincere to your commitment is also open.

Now is the time to commit yourself to Islam and to become sincere. You must ensure that your whole life is based on spending for the cause of Islam by giving your time, attention, heart and mind - utilising the faculties of speaking, writing, reasoning and intelligence that Allah has bestowed on you for the establishment of His *Din* or way of life. Only then will you attain the highest station of faith:

Never will you attain the highest degree of virtue unless you spend [freely] *in the cause of Allah out*

of that which you love; and whatever you spend Allah surely knows it well. [Ali Imran 3: 93.]

THE SMALL CHARITY

We should never consider any charity too small or not worth doing or giving. Even meeting your Muslim brother or sister with a smiling face or giving a good word of encouragement and praise are acts of *sadaqa*. Adi bin Hatim has related that the Prophet Muhammad said:

Every one of you will certainly meet Allah. On the day that he meets Him, there will be no curtain between them, nor any interpreter. He shall then say, `Did I not send you a Messenger who was conveying the Message to you?' He will reply, `Certainly'. He shall then say, `Did I not give you property and show favour on you?' He will reply, "Certainly'. Then he will look to his right and see only *Jahannam* and he will look to his left and see only *Jahannam* [Then the Prophet said] Guard against the fire, even though it be with half a date. And, if anyone does not have even that much, he should do so with a good word. (*Bukhari*.)

Some people have so narrow a view that they cannot bring themselves round to even utter a kind and pleasant word. The Messenger of Allah has said: `Do not belittle even the smallest act of kindness, even if it were no more than meeting your brother with a smiling and cheerful face.' (*Muslim*.)

It will not cost a penny to say a good word, but so miserly we have may become that we are not even prepared to utter a word of kindness, praise and encouragement. It will make a lot of difference to our spouses, siblings, and neighbours - be they Muslim or non-Muslim- if we were to be loving and kind in all our inter-personal relationships.

MODES OF GIVING

Your *din* or way of life can be one of two types: one way of life is to look after your own self interests and the other way is to seek to improve the welfare of others, even at your own expense, in order to earn the pleasure of Allah. These are two diametrically opposed ways of thinking, behaving and living. Now the way to Allah is the way of giving. The Prophet made a comparison of the two different personalities as follows:

The case of a miser and a generous one is like that of two people who are clad in steel armour from their breasts up to their collar bones. When the generous one spends, his armour expands until it covers his fingers and his toes. When the miser makes up his mind to spend something every ring of the amour sinks into his flesh. He tries to loosen it but it is not loosened. (*Bukhari, Muslim*.)

Wealth and possessions are a *baraka* or blessing from Allah when used in a productive way to earn the pleasure of Allah. Otherwise, it can be our worst enemy, a curse. As soon as we realise that everything belongs to Allah and that the things that we are going to receive in the *Akhira* depend on how much we spend in the *Dunya*, it will become easier to give freely from our pockets. Giving and sacrificing will become a pleasure rather than a burden.

For most of our life, we work hard to earn money in order to build bank balances and to buy houses. These are all commendable acquisitions - in moderation. Remember that you may have a house with one hundred rooms, but you can sleep in only one room. You may have one hundred dresses in your wardrobe, but at any one time you can wear only a single dress. You may have one hundred dishes

laid on the table, but you cannot eat more than will fill your one stomach. Even that may be difficult for you to digest. Always remember the *hadith*: `Self-sufficiency does not mean plenty of provisions; it means self sufficiency of the spirit.' (*Bukhari*.) All those extravagant things that deceive you are not worth pursuing or living for.

Say: if it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred; the wealth that you have gained; the commerce in which you fear a decline; or t wanwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah, or his Messenger, or the striving in His Cause - then wait until Allah brings about His Decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious. [at Tawba 9: 24.]

LOVE OF THIS WORLD

I am not saying that you should not enjoy the `good things of this world'. Rather, we must work hard for them because nothing good comes without genuine effort. Abu Bakr as-Siddiq said: `Your religion is your future and your money is your livelihood: there is no good in a man with no money in his name.' We should therefore live this life fully. We should be interested in it. As Allah encourages us:

Seek, by means of what Allah has granted you, the life to come. and forget not your share of the present world; and do good as Allah has done good to you; and seek not to spread corruption on earth. [al-Qasas 28: 77.]

In addition, the Prophet informed us that wealth can also serve to increase our *taqwa:* `What a good helper is wealth in maintaining God-consciousness.' (*Kanz al-Ummal*.) He also said: `Anyone who acquires it [wealth] lawfully and spends it lawfully, for him it is the best helper.' (*Muslim*.)

Thus, all the good things in life must be pursued, but not the love of this world. There is no true enjoyment of the good of this world if we do not adequately prepare our home in the Next world. Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz used to repeat the following verse unceasingly: 'There is no good in the life of a man for whom Allah has appointed no share in the everlasting abode.'

The love that we should desire is the love of the *Akhira*: For this to be achieved, *the love of Allah and His Messenger must be dearer to you than all else* [al-Baqara 2: 165]. This will earn you the pleasures of this world and of the next. When the Prophet was requested by one Companion to tell him of some deeds which will make him earn the love of Allah, as well as that of other people, he replied, `Do not covet this world, and Allah will love you; do not covet what people possess, and people will love you'. (*Bukhari*.)

It is not the amount of money that you possess which matters in the eyes of Allah. Rather, He wants you to rid yourself of the love for that money. If a person has one pound only, but his heart is in that one pound, then he is a man of this world. On the contrary, if he has 100,000 pounds and his heart is not in those pounds and he is prepared to part with it whenever it is required, then he is not a man of this world; he is a highly spiritual man. Similarly, if you earn £10 and give £5 in charity, this is much more precious in the eyes of Allah than someone who earns £100,000 and gives £1,000. The first person has given half of his wealth while the second has given one-hundredth of what he has earned.

In the time of the Prophet, those who possessed firm conviction in Allah’s promises would bring

everything they had in their homes and put it at the feet of the Prophet. It is of the *Sahaba* and their selfless sacrifices that the Quran says: *They give preference over their own selves, even when they themselves are destitute*. [al-Hashr 59: 9.]

If you truly seek the pleasures and rewards of the Hereafter, spend, *infaq fi sabilillah*! This is one of the most effective ways of ridding ourselves of the love for the *Dunya* and acquiring a love for the Hereafter. It is indeed an important instrument of *tazkiya* as the Quran declares:

And the likeness of those who spend their substance, seeking to please Allah and to strengthen their souls, is as a garden high and fertile: heavy rainfalls on it, but makes it yield a double increase in harvest. [al-Baqara 2: 265.]

While spending in the way of Allah, you must give as much as you can give, but do so with moderation. The Quran exhorts us to be like *those who are neither extravagant nor niggardly in spending but keep a balance between the two.* [al-Furqan 25: 67.]

There are also two important things you must take care to avoid when giving to those in need. One is that of *kibr* or pride and the other is *riya* or show. Giving with pride in your heart and actions will only consume your good deeds while spending to seek the attention of others will corrupt your pure intentions and make your actions worthless in the eyes of Allah.

The battle to part with what you possess is one that you will experience each day until your meeting with your Lord. It is an ongoing war between the temptations of this world and our conviction in the rewards of the *Akhira.*

This world is filled with beauty and attractions but the *Akhira* is filled with beauty unimaginable. The Quran has made a comparison between both worlds.

Alluring has been made for people the love of desires for women, and children, and heaped up treasures of gold and silver, and horses of high ranks, and cattle, and farms. But all that may be enjoyed only in the present life - whereas, the best resort is with Allah. Say: Shall I tell you of better things than these [earthly joys]? *For the God-conscious there are with their Lord, gardens through which waters flow, therein to abide for ever, and pure spouses, and Allah's good pleasure.* [Ali Imran 3: 14-15.]

FORGIVING OTHERS

Sadaqa also has no value without love and sympathy. The Quran states: *Kind words and the covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury.* [al-Baqara 2:263] Those who are generous forgive people for their mistakes. The Prophet reminded us: 'If one gives charity it does not diminish his wealth; if one forgives others, Allah bestows more honour on him; and if one humbles himself for Allah's sake, He exalts him higher.' (*Muslim*.) The Quran also mentions both giving and forgiving together: *And compete with one another for your Lord's forgiveness and a Paradise as vast as the heavens and earth prepared for the God-fearing, who give generously whether in times of plenty or in times of hardship, and hold in check their anger, and pardon their fellow human beings; Allah loves such doers of good.* [Ali Imran 3:133-134]

Spending in the way of Allah is closely related to controlling anger and forgiving people. All come from a big heart. The Prophet said: `Two of the qualities which Allah loves are gentleness and endurance.' (*Bukhari*.) When your heart becomes big enough to forgive the faults of others, Allah has promised for you the reward of *Janna*.

The wronged one who endures with fortitude and forgiveness indeed achieves a matter of high resolve. [ash-Shura 42:43]

SUMMARY

Whatever you can give, spend. Spend on your family and those in need. but be even more generous in spending for the cause of Islam. Remember that the time to commit yourself to Islam is now. Utilise all the resources at your disposal: time, attention, heart and mind, faculties of speaking, writing, reasoning and intelligence that Allah has bestowed on you for the establishment of His *Din*. Do not let the love of this world beguile you. Be forgiving and accommodating to your fellow human beings if you want to earn the forgiveness and mercy of Allah.

May Allah enable us to detach ourselves not from this world, but from the love of this world. May He help us to spend of that which He has bestowed on us for out own benefit.

Chapter 2

Sharḥ ʿAjā'ib al-Qalb

In this chapter the following points are discussed in detail: from *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn, Imam al-Ghazālī*

The Reality of the Heart (Qalb)

- The "heart" has **two meanings**:
  (1) the physical organ, and
  (2) the spiritual, luminous essence that perceives, feels, knows, and turns to Allah.
- The **spiritual heart** is the *true human*, the center of awareness and the seat of knowledge.

-The Heart: King of the Body

- The heart is the **king**, and the limbs are the **servants**.
- Actions of the body reflect the inner state of the heart.
- When the heart is sound, actions are pure; when corrupted, everything becomes corrupt.

- The Heart's Two Doors

Ghazālī explains that the heart has access to two realms:

(1) The Door of the Senses (External)

- Sight, hearing, touch, etc.
- These bring the world's information into the heart.

(2) The Door of the Unseen (Internal)

- Inspiration (ilhām), angelic thoughts, divine light.
- This door opens through purification and dhikr.

-Forces Inside the Human

The human has **four inner forces**, each influencing behavior:

1. **Beastly (shahwah)** — desire, appetite
2. **Predatory (ghaḍab)** — anger, aggression

3. **Satanic (waswasa)** — deception, illusion
4. **Angelic/Intellectual (ʿaql)** — reason, light, guidance

The heart must govern these forces so they serve, not dominate.

-The Heart as a Mirror

- The heart is a **mirror** that reflects truths.
- Sins, desires, and heedlessness are **rust** that darkens the mirror.
- Dhikr, Qur'ān, repentance, and abstinence **polish** the heart until it reflects divine realities.

- Two Armies of the Heart

Ghazālī divides influences on the heart into two armies:

Army of Angels (Light)

- Truth, guidance, wisdom, humility, sincerity.

Army of Shayṭān (Darkness)

- Arrogance, greed, envy, lust, pride, distractions.

The heart is a battlefield—whichever army dominates shapes one's life.

- Three Kinds of Hearts

The Qur'ān mentions three spiritual states:

1. The Alive Heart (Qalb Ḥayy / Munīr)

- Filled with faith, humility, and remembrance.
- Open to Allah's light.

2. The Sick Heart (Qalb Marīḍ)

- Torn between truth and desires.
- Needs discipline and purification.

3. The Dead Heart (Qalb Mayyit)

- Covered by worldly desires.
- Unaffected by reminders, closed to guidance.

The goal is to transform the sick heart into a living one.

-Wonders of the Heart's Knowledge

- True knowledge is **light placed by Allah**.
- Books and intellect are tools; but enlightenment is divine.
- A purified heart receives spiritual insights unavailable to the impure.

- Why the Heart is Called 'Qalb'

Because it constantly **turns** (taqallub):

- between obedience and sin
- between dunya and Ākhirah
- between light and darkness

Hence the Prophet ﷺ frequently prayed:

اللَّهُمَّ يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

"O Turner of hearts, keep my heart firm on Your religion." (Sunan al-Tirmidhī)

- Enemy Forces Against the Heart

Imam Ghazālī lists the primary enemies:

1. **Shayṭān** — whispers and deceptions
2. **The Nafs** — the ego and desires
3. **The World (Dunya)** — distractions and temptations
4. **Evil Companionship** — corrupting influences

Protection requires dhikr, muraqabah, and righteous company.

- How the Heart Perceives

The heart perceives in two ways:

1. Acquired Knowledge (through senses, learning)

— reading, studying, listening

2. Inner Illumination (kashf, ilhām)

— direct insight given by Allah to purified hearts

Purification prepares the heart for divine openings.

- The Heart's Capacity for Allah

This is the greatest wonder:

The heart can know Allah, love Him, and reflect His light.

No other creation has this capacity.

A heart filled with Allah's remembrance becomes a **throne of divine presence**.

- Diseases of the Heart

Ghazālī lists the major diseases:

- Pride
- Arrogance
- Envy
- Lust
- Anger
- Greed
- Love of leadership
- Love of dunya
- Showing-off (riyā')
- Heedlessness (ghaflah)

The chapter explains how these block divine light.

- Purification of the Heart

Curing the heart requires:

- Repentance (tawbah)
- Dhikr
- Qur'ān recitation
- Abstinence (zuhd)
- Muraqabah (watchfulness)

- Mujāhadah (striving against desires)
- Keeping pious company
- Avoiding sins—especially the tongue and private desires

Purification is both **removing evil** and **cultivating good**.

-Purpose of Knowing the Heart

The purpose of understanding the heart's wonders is:

- to recognize its value
- to protect it
- to purify it
- to make it a vessel for divine knowledge

Ghazālī says:

"He who knows his heart knows his Lord."

Key points

The heart is the true essence of a human.
It receives both worldly information and divine light.
It is a mirror that must be polished from sins.
Its enemies are desire, anger, and Satan.
When purified, it becomes capable of knowing and loving Allah, which is the highest purpose of life.

THE REVIVAL OF RELIGIOUS LEARNINGS

The Book of Destructive Evils

PART I

CHAPTER 1

SOUL AND ITS ATTRIBUTES

It is by means of soul that man is the Lord of creation as it is by means of soul that man acquires the knowledge of God and His attributes and by no other organs of the body. It is by means of soul that man can go to the nearness of God and make efforts to realise Him. So soul is the king of the body and its different organs are its servants to carry out its orders and commands. It is accepted by God when it remains free from things other than God. When it is attached to things other than God, it drifts away from God. It is the soul which will be asked and rebuked. It becomes fortunate if it is purified and cleaned, and it becomes fortunate if it is kept impure. It is the knowledge of soul which is the root of the knowledge of God. When man does not know himself he does not know God. Majority of men are ignorant of soul and its attributes as screen is cast between soul and baser self. God says: "God moves between a man and his soul and controls it and its attributes. It is between the two fingers of the Merciful. It sometimes reaches the last limit of the devil and sometimes rises so high as to the throne of the Almighty. He who does not enquire about his soul is included among those persons of whom God says in the following verse: They forgot God and so He made their souls forgetful 19:67. They are the transgressors. It is therefore essential to know soul and its attributes which is the root of religion.

What has been said in the earlier pages of this book relates to the outward organs and bodily limbs. Now we shall narrate the attributes and evils of soul which are the subject matter of secret knowledge.

WORDS-NAFS, RUH, QALB, AQL EXPLAINED

(1) QALB has got two meanings. It means first a piece of flesh in the left breast called heart which is hollow in the interior,

which is filled up with black blood and which is again a source of Ruh or life. Heart is the centre or mine for circulation of blood. The detailed description of heart is to be found in Anatomy. It exists in breasts and lower animals and appertains to the material world. We shall not refer to it in our book. The second meaning of Qalb is soul with which we are concerned here. It is an immaterial thing or formless Latifa or basic subtle element which has got connection with the material heart. It is just like unseen electricity. It is the principal thing in a man. It catches knowledge of God and spiritual world. It is punished and rewarded. The connection of soul with heart is the connection of attributes with the bodily limbs, or a machine with the machine man, or a house with its inmates. This connection is of two kinds. One kind of connection is with Ulume Mokashafa or spiritual knowledge. But in this look, our object is to narrate Ulume Muamalah or knowledge of worldly usages. Its second connection requires the knowledge of the secrets of soul. The Prophet did not throw light on this object and so we should refrain from it. We shall translate the word Qalb in this book as soul or an immaterial thing Latifa with its attributes.

(2) **RUH:** It has got also two meanings. It means first a material thing within the heart which vibrates the whole body like the current of electricity and which runs through the veins of the body. It is called 'life'. It has got the power of touch , hearing, sight, smell and the power of the other limbs of the body. It is just like radiation of light of a lighted lamp pitched in a corner of the house. It is a subtle gas or steam which creates the heat of the heart. Our object is not that. The second meaning of Ruh is an immaterial subtle thing which is called soul and not life. God says: They ask you about Ruh. Say: It is a command from my Lord. 17: 85.

(3) **NAFS:** It has got also two meanings for our purpose. The first meanings is passion or baser and lower self. Passion is a comprehensive word consisting of greed, anger and other evil attributes. The Prophet said: Your greatest enemy is your passion lying by your two sides. The second meaning of Nafs is soul as described above. When Nafs assumes calmness and has removed passion, it is then termed Nafs Mutmainna or satisfied soul as God says: O satisfied soul, return to your Lord satisfied and satisfying him-89: 27. In the first meaning, Nafs is with the party of devil. When the calm nature of Nafs does not become perfect, it

is called Nafs Lawwamah or self-accusing soul, as such a soul rebukes one for neglecting divine duties. If soul gives up protests and surrenders itself to the devil, it is called Nafs Ammarah or passion addicted to evils. The Quran refers to this in verse 12 : 53?

(4) **AQL:** It has got many meanings two of which we shall narrate here. The first meaning of Aql is intellect with which true nature of things of this material world is known and its seat is in soul. The second meaning of Aql is power to understand the secrets of different learnings. It is a subtle essence called knowledge which is an attribute. Attribute and the thing which contains it are two different things. Intellect is the name of both. This is supported by the following Hadis. The first thing which God created is intellect. The attribute of intellect is an immaterial thing but the attribute cannot stand without a material thing. So the place of intellect should be created first or along with it. Knowledge is the content of intellect and so it was created first.

ARMY OF SOUL: God says in years 71 : 31- None except He knows the army of your Lord'. There are armed soldiers in soul. Their real nature is not known and nobody knows their number except He. Soul has got two armies. One army can be seen by the external eye and another army cannot be seen except by the internal eye. These two armies are necessary for upkeep of the dominion of this king. Courtiers, servants, helpers, etc. are the armies of the king which can bee seen by the external eyes. Similarly, hands, feet, eyes, ears, tongue and other outward and inward organs are the armies of soul. They are all servants of soul which rules over them. They have been created to obey them. They cannot go against soul. When the soul orders the eyes to open, they open. When it orders the feet to walk, they walk. Their submission is like that of angels of God. The angels have been created to obey God and they cannot go against Him. These armies are necessary for soul for its journey to God, as conveyance and food are necessary for body. It has to cross many stations to meet Him for which it has been created. God says: I have not created Jinn and man but that they should worship Me-51:56. Body is the conveyance or carrier of soul and its food is knowledge. In order that it can acquire its food, the ingredients which are necessary are goods deeds. To reach God is impossible till the body does not remain sound.

This world is the seed ground for the next and a station of guidance. It is called Duniya or near planet as it is the closest

station out of many stations. So to acquire food in the world is necessary.

TWO ARMIES OF HEALTH: To take food which keeps the health of body is necessary and to avoid that which is harmful to it is to be avoided. So it is necessary to approach two armies, the hidden army of greed for food and drink and the open army of bodily organs. So greed for food and drink have been created in soul as they are necessary for the upkeep of the body, and the other organs are the arms of greed. Two armies are also necessary to remove the outer enemies who are destructive evils, such as anger etc. with which these evils are removed.

ARMIES OF SOUL ARE THREE: (1) One army does benefit to soul, the army of greed. It can be termed Will also. (2) The second army is anger which moves the bodily organs to give the object of greed power and strength. (3) The third army works like secret emissaries-powers of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. These defined powers are entrusted to different organs. For those armies, there are open arms-fingers to catch, eyes to see etc. The third army is divided into two. One army lives openly, such as attributes of five organs-hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. Another army lives secretly in the horizon of brain. They are five-(1) power of idea (2) power of thought (3) power of memory, (4) power of retention (5) and power of consolidating them together. These five powers are in brain and they secretly stay therein.

These are the armies of soul. A man of weak intellect will feel difficult to understand them but the wise get benefit from these discussions. We shall try to make those who are weak, in understanding these things by illustrations.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SECRET ARMIES OF SOUL

(1) **Soul is a king over body as a king over an empire.** In the empire of soul, hands, feet and other organs are like different business men and industrialists in town. Greed is a collector of revenue in that town, anger is its police, intellect is it minister and soul is its king. The collector greed is like one who collects food and anger is like a police who keeps guard over it. The collector greed is a downright liar and a deceiver. It ostensibly wishes good but there is destructive poison in it. The reign of soul over the region of body is similar. It goes on well if all organs and

attributes are under the rule of soul. When soul takes the help of its minister intellect, it rules over greed keeping anger in control. In order to bring anger under control, sometimes it seeks the help of greed and then its character and conduct become good. He who goes away from this path, becomes like one about whom God speaks in the following verse: Have you looked towards one who takes his passion as deity-25:43? God says: He who follows his greed is like a dog. If you attack it, it will prolong its tongue. If you give it up, it will also prolong its tongue-7:176. God speaks in another verse about the person who controlled his passion: As for such men as entertained the fear of standing before their Lord and controlled their souls from low desires, their abode will be Paradise-79:41.

(2) **Second illustration of secret army of soul.** Know, O dear readers, that the body is a town and intellect or conscience rules over that town like a king. Its armies are its external and internal senses and its subject are its organs. Sexual passion and anger are the enemies of the region of body and soul is its guard. If it fights against its enemies and defeats them and compels them to do what soul likes, its actions become commendable and it returns to the Almighty. God says that He gives superiority to those who fight with their lives and properties over those who worship sitting-9:20Q. If the soul acts as guard like the frontier guards and neglects the organs of the body, it is punished. On the Resurrection Day, it will be asked: O dishonest guard, you have eaten food and drunk milk, but you have not inquired into lost animal and have not arranged for treatment of diseased animals. To-day I will take retaliation on you for this. In the Hadis below, such a Mujahid or fighter has been praised: You have returned from the little fight to the greatest fight.

(3) **Third illustration of secret army of soul.** Intellect is like a rider, greed is like a horse and anger is like his hunting dog. When the rider is expert and his horse and dog are trained, success can be obtained in hunting. When the rider is inexperienced, horse disobedient and dog biting, then the horse does not obey the rider and the dog does not run obeying him. Similarly, when intellect is mature and greed and anger are submissive to intellect, success in sure, but if intellect is immature and greed and anger are not under control, there is surely ruin.

KNOWLEDGE AND WILL: The attributes for which man's soul becomes fit to approach God and honoured are knowledge and will. Knowledge means knowledge of the material and spiritual world and reality of intellect. Then matters lie behind the knowledge gained by the senses. Lower animals have got no share in it. Regarding will, when a man can understand by his intellect the result of any action and know what will bring good, then there grows in his mind will to obtain that good and to do that action. It is not the will of greed or the instinct of the lower animals. It is opposed to greed. Intellect wills what will be its good in future and spends for it. There is greed of taking delicious food in illness but intellect prohibits its eating. A wise man refrains from eating it. So soul of man is endowed with knowledge and will and not the lower animals. Even little children are void of these attributes. There are two stages of acquiring knowledge on the part of a boy. The first stage is his learning of all preliminary necessary things and to know lawful and unlawful things. He cannot gain expert knowledge at this stage but becomes close to it. The second stage is his acquisition of knowledge by learning and thinking. He becomes then like an expert writer.

THREE MODES OF GAINING SOUL-POWER: (1) Mode of Ilham or inspiration. God's inspiration comes on some souls unknowingly and for that they gain spiritual knowledge. (2) Some souls acquire spiritual power by learning and efforts. (3) Some souls acquire spiritual power quickly and some late. There are degrees of these acquisitions in the case of Prophets, friends of God, wise and learned men. This advance is unlimited. There is no limit of knowledge about God. The rank of a Prophet in this regard is highest. All secrets are disclosed to him without his efforts. A child in its mother's womb does not know the condition of a boy. A boy does not know the condition of a grown-up-man. A grown-up man does not know the condition of an intelligent man and his acquired learning. Similarly, an intelligent man does not know the blessings, mercy and gifts showered by God on the Prophets. These blessings are also cast upon those souls which remain prepared and become fit to receive them. The Prophet said: "There is your Lord's blowing in the days of your life. Beware and be prepared for it". The meaning of this preparation is to remove the impurities that have fallen on soul as a result of commission of sins and to purify it. It

can be understood from the following Hadis: God comes down every night to the nearest heaven and says: Is there any invoking man whose invocation I shall accept? In another Hadis: The religious man remains eager to meet Me, but I am more eager to meet him. In a Hadis Qudsi, God says: I advance one cubit for one who advances to Me half a cubit.

From this, it is understood that God does not withhold His mercy to shed the luster of knowledge on soul , but the people themselves are to be blamed for they do not cleanse their souls or minds from the impurities they heaped on them. As air does not enter a pot full of water, so knowledge of God does not enter a soul or mind if it remains filled up with things other than God. For this reason, the Holy Prophet said: Had the party of the devil not moved round the minds of the children of Adam, they would have seen the spiritual world. From this, it is understood that knowledge is the special attribute of human soul. The knowledge about God's being, attributes and actions is the most honorable and on that strength a man becomes perfect and within this perfection there lies his fortune of approaching God.

PECULIARITIES OF HUMAN SOUL: Body has been framed for accommodation of soul which is again the house of knowledge. Divine knowledge is the human goal and its speciality. An ass and a horse are the same for carrying loads but a horse is superior to an ass, as horse has got additional qualities of beauty and running fast which an ass and other animals lack in. similarly there is difference between a man and an angel. The man who engages all his limbs, thoughts and actions to please God is like an angel and fit to be called an angel. God says about Joseph: Surely he is an honourable angel-12:21. He who makes efforts only for his physical comforts comes down to the class of an animal. He becomes then envious like an ox, greedy like a pig, biting like a dog, eats like a camel, takes revenge like a leopard, cunnings like a jackal and clever like a devil-the embodiment of the above evils. There is no such limb or senses which do not help a man to reach God. He is successful who walks in that path and he is unsuccessful who is misguided.

Man's fortune lies in Taing God's vision as the ultimate goal, the next world as his permanent abode, this world as his temporary abode, body as his carrier and the limbs as his servants.

Human soul is the centre to realise them and a king over the region of body. His power of idea works like a post office in front of his head. All news gathered by senses are accumulated there. The power of thinking keeping behind the brain works like a treasurer, the tongue as its interpreter, the five senses like secret police. Eyes have been given power to receive various colour, ears to receive different voices, nose to smell and other limbs to receive other news and they send them to the power of ideas which send them to the power of thinking which send them to the king soul.

Hazrat Ka'ab Ahbar said: I went once to Hazrat Ayesha and said: Man's eyes are his guide, his two ears are his guards, his tongue his interpreter, his two hands are his wings, his two feet are his news carriers and his soul is his king. When the king soul is pleased, his armies are also pleased. Hazrat Ayesha said: I heard the Prophet say thus. Hazrat Ali said by way of illustration of human soul: God has got many pots in this world. The dearest to God among them is that which is most soft, pure and strong. Then he explained and said: The soul which is most firm in religion, most pure in faith, most kind in treatment with brethren is dearest to God. This can be seen from the following verse: They are hard upon the unbelievers and kind to one another among them- 48:29. In another verse; God says: His light is like a niche wherein there is lamp-24:35. To explain this verse, Hazrat Ka'ab said: The meaning of light is the light of soul of a believer. God says: Or it is like darkness in a fathomless sea. Hence the soul of hyporite has been spoken of as an illustration.

NATURES OF MEN: There are four natures of man (1) beastly nature, (2) animal nature, (3) devilish nature and (4) angelic nature. Anger is a sign of beastly nature along with enemity, hatred, rebuke, attack on people etc. His animal nature is seen when his sexual passion becomes strong. He has got devilish natures like deceit, fraud conspiracy etc. He has got angelic nature such as divine service, worship of God, doing good to all. As he has got the divine thing soul, he has got the nature of lordship and he likes to be free from servitude and meanness.

The roots of these four natures are in a man and centred in human soul. If he has got only the nature of a lower animal, he becomes like a pig or a dog. If he has got only the nature of the

devil, he becomes a devil. If he has got divine qualities, he becomes a truly wise man. If he follows sexual passion and greed, he acquires the evils of impurity, shamelessness, meanness, miserliness, hatred and other bad habits. If he obeys the dictates of anger, he acquires heinous conducts such as haughtiness, pride, love of power, self-praise, jokes, contempt for others, oppression. If he obeys the devil, he acquires evil conducts such as deceit, deception, treachery, fraud etc. When he controls the above evils, he is endowed with divine qualities such as wisdom, knowledge, certain faith, knowledge of the natures of all things. When he becomes free from sexual passion and anger, he acquires the following virtues-pardon, contentment, self satisfaction, asceticism, piety, God fear, contentment and shame. If he keeps anger under control, he gains heroism, kindness, patience, silence etc.

SOUL IS A MIRROR: Soul is like a mirror in which the above evils and virtues are reflected. The virtues make the soul shining, resplendent and bright and the evils, sins and guilts make it dark. The Prophet said: When God wants good of a servant, He appoints an admonished in his soul. He said: He who has got an admonished in his soul has got a guard from God. Zikr or God's remembrance becomes lasting in his soul. God says: Beware, souls get consolation by the remembrance of God 13 : 25. The sins are like smokes full of darkness which covers the soul. One sin after another comes over the soul like a layer of smokes till his soul gets completely enveloped wit darkness. As a result, soul becomes removed from God. It is the seal on soul of which God speaks in verse 83 : 14-Never, it is seal on souls for what they have earned. God says: Had I wished, I would have surely punished them and sealed their souls."

When sins accumulate in soul, it becomes blind to good things of religion. The sage Maimun-b-Mehran said: When a man commits a sin, a black spot falls in his soul. When he makes repentance, it blots out. Again when he commits sin, the spot increases. Thus if sins are committed one after another, the soul becomes dark and that is the seal on soul. The Prophet said: The soul of a believer is bright and there is a bright lamp in it. The soul of an unbeliever is black and blind.' The polish of soul is obedience to God with opposition to passion. Sins are impurities on soul. He who proceeds towards sins makes his soul dark.

FOUR KINDS OF SOUL: The Prophet said: Soul is of four kinds. The first kind of soul is bright in which there is a lighted lamp. It is the soul of a believer. (2) The second kind of soul is black and it is the soul of an unbeliever. (3) The third kind of soul is confined within cover and it is the soul of a hypocrite. (4) The fourth kind of soul is mixed with faith and hypocrisy. Faith in such a soul is like a plant which the water grows and if there is other liquids like blood and pus, its growth is retarded. God says: When a party of the devil attack those who are God fearing, they remember God and they keep on looking 7:201. The brightness of soul is gained by Zikr which finds consolation in a person who has got God-fear. So God-fear is the gate of Zikr which is again the gate of Kashf or inner revelation which is again the gate of salvation and the gate of having the fortune of Divine vision.

ILLUSTRATION OF SOUL: Soul is a container of knowledge. As a mirror has got connection with figure and form, so also a soul has got connection with objects of knowledge. In other words, picture, or figure can be seen if placed in front of a mirror. So also different objects of knowledge are reflected in soul. A mirror assumes the colour of a figure placed before it. Similarly soul assumes the colour or nature of an unknown object of knowledge. Every object of knowledge has got a nature and every nature has got a figure. That figure is reflected in the mirror of soul and is clearly visible. Mirror is a thing figure is a different thing and its shadow in the mirror is a different thing. Similarly a man has got three different things-(1) soul, (2) real nature of a thing, (3) and the knowledge of its real nature. Soul is the name of a thing with which knowledge is gained. Shadows of everything are reflected in it. So the container of knowledge, object of knowledge and knowledge itself are inter connected. For instance, to catch a shield is an action. Here there are three things (1) hand, (2) shield and (3) catching. These three things connected together produce an action. Similarly knowledge is a thing which is connected with soul with the shadow of the thing therein and the falling of that shadow therein. Knowledge does not arise unless the object of knowledge falls in soul. Fire cannot be said to fall in soul to produce knowledge of fire. Shadow of fire in soul is sufficient to produce it. The real man does not remain in mirror. The shadow of his real self remains in mirror. Similarly real shadows of all things fall in soul and that is called knowledge.

FIVE OBSTACLES OF GAINING DIVINE KNOWLEDGE: There are five obstacles or hurdles which prevent real pictures in a mirror. A picture cannot be seen in a mirror if the thing with which the mirror is made is spoiled or if impurities fallin the mirror, or if the mirror is not directed towards the picture, there is something between the mirror and the picture, or if the picture is not in front of the mirror. Similar is the case with human soul. It has got five obstacles. Human soul has got the fitness to receive true pictures of everything, but if it cannot do its function, it will be understood that knowledge cannot come owing to the five obstacles.

(1) **The first obstacle** is a natural defect of soul as the souls of boys.

(2) **The second obstacle** is the impurities of sins owing to greed, passion and low desires. If the impurities of sins are not removed just like the impurities in a mirror, truth is not reflected in it. The Prophet therefore said: The intellect of a man who is accustomed to commit sins goes away. It never comes back to him. In other words, rust falls in his soul unless it is removed by a good deed and repentance. If dust falls on a mirror, it can be removed by a duster. Soul becomes bright if it does not follow low desires and urge of passion. God says: I shall show My paths to those who strive hard about Me-29:69 The Prophet said: God grants such wisdom to one who acts up to his learning which he did not know before.

(3) **Third obstacle of soul.** As nothing can be seen if a mirror is not directed towards a figure or picture, so real picture of a thing does not fall in soul if it is misguided from the real object of research and enquiry. Brightness of truth is not reflected in soul owing to the object of enquiry not being directed towards soul although it is clean and pure. The picture of an object about which a man thinks falls in his soul. He who confines his thoughts and efforts to the different modes of health gains health. So he who engage his whole attention and energy to the attainment of Divine love can acquire it. But he whose attention is diverted only to worldly pursuits gets them no doubt but is not blessed with divine love and grace. It is an obstacle and a hurdle to acquisition of Kashf or secret divine knowledge.

(4) **Fourth obstacle of soul.** If there is something between a mirror and a picture or figure, the figure cannot be seen in mirror.

So also if there is screen between a human soul and a thing desired, its true picture cannot be reflected in soul. Truth cannot come out from a screened soul. Whose follows his passions and low desires, screen falls in his soul. The beliefs which take root in early years of life from the surrounding environments paint the future of a man and create obstacles in finding out the truth of a thing. This is also true in case of open Taqlid or blind faith in a sect. Such a man does not accept what is opposed to his belief although it is true and correct.

(5) **Fifth obstacle of soul** is ignorance. This ignorance occurs in connection with a special object. As a result, defect is cast upon the object of enquiry. For instance if a student enquires about an unknown subject it will be impossible to know it until he ponders over the thing connected with the object of enquiry and that pondering is not along the prescribed mode of the learned, as the object of enquiry is to be known on the basis of other learnings. Mixture of two learnings produces knowledge of a third kind, as a young one of a camel is obtained owing to the cohabitation of a camel and a she camel. He who wants to get a young one of a horse, he can't get it if he unites and ass and a camel, but he will get it when a horse and a she horse cohabit. Similar is the case with every knowledge. It has got two roots and there is prescribed mode of the union of the roots. Knowledge cannot arise unless the mode of union is not known. If one does not stand in front of a mirror, he cannot see his face therein. If the mirror is kept in front of face, he can't see his back. So there is certain methods of acquiring knowledge.

So there are five hurdles in the reflection of truth in souls for which we hardly see truths. Soul is a celestial thing and it has got natural attribute of knowing truth. God says about this soul. I have placed this trust upon the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they all refused to carry it and feared it, but only man has borne it. Surely he is oppressive, ignorant-33:72 Q. It appears from this that soul has got such a special attribute which the heavens and the earth and the mountains do not possess. For that they have been made subservient to man. This trust is Ma'arfat or Divine knowledge and Tauhid.

However, soul is naturally fit to bear this trust, but it cannot reach its real nature owing to the obstacles narrated above. For this reason, the Prophet said: Every child is born upon nature,

but his parents make him a Jew, or a Christian or a Maginan. The Prophet said: If the party of the devil did not move in the soul of the son of Adam: he could have seen the divine realm. It appears from this Hadis also that the above five obstacles prevent a man from seeing the divine realm. The Prophet was once asked: Where is God-in earth or in heaven? He said: God is in the soul of a believer. In another Hadis, there is this: The Prophet was asked : Who is the best man? The Prophet replied: The believer whose soul is Makhmus is best. He was asked: What is Makhmus? He said: That soul is Makhmus which is God-fearing, in which there is no deceit, deception, treachery, contrivance and hatred. For this reason, the Prophet said: When God-fear lifted from my soul the screen (of sins), my Lord saw my soul? Whoever lifts up the screen of sins from his soul, the pictures of unseen things are disclosed in his soul. Then he can see paradise which extends in heaven and earth. Unseen world is outside of external eyes. When this world of sight and the unseen world are united at a time, it is termed Hazrat Rabubiyat or the presence of God's being which can encompass everything. There is no existence of anything except that of God, His actions and His sovereignty. His servants are included within His actions. The object of all actions is to make soul pure and bright. The Quran says: He who purifies it will get salvation-91:8Q. The object of purity of soul is to gain light of faith therein or to enkindle the light of divine knowledge. Regarding this, God says: God expends the breast of one for Islam whom He wishes to guide. God says: Whose breast God has expanded for Islam, he is on light from his Lord-39 : 22.

THREE STAGES OF LIGHT OF FAITH: This light of faith in soul has got three stages. In the first stage, the light is that of faith of ordinary man. It is the light of blind faith. In the second stage, it is the light of faith of the followers of Fiqh or jurisprudence. It is mixed with some sort of proof. In the third stage, it is the light of faith of the friends of God. It is the dazzling ray of certain faith. Take for instance the stay of Zaid within his house. It can be proved in three ways. The first kind of proof is belief on hearing. If you have belief in a certain man and you know that he does not speak lie, you will believe his word that Zaid is in his house. This is the belief of ordinary man based on hearing only. When the little boys attain maturity, they hear from their parents and relatives that there is God, that He is almighty, Creator of everything, that He sent apostles with books. They believe them

on hearing. This belief will be the cause of salvation in the next world. But they will be in the first stage of the fortunate but not included within the near ones, as there is no opening of their inner eye (Kashf) with the help of certain faith and no expansion of breast, and there may be defects in-heresay.

The second kind of proof is as follows. That Zaid is within his house can be guessed from a hearing of his voice and talks coming from his house. So this belief is stronger than that of heresay. There may be also mistake of voices and words. The third kind of proof is to enter into the room and see Zaid with open eyes. This is real knowledge gained by direct sight. This knowledge is like that of the friends of God and near ones. There is no mistake in this belief.

There are however degrees of this knowledge or Kashf among them. If Zaid is seen in front in light or sunlight, it is perfect sight. If he is seen in the house from a great distance or like his figure at night, it is less perfect. Similarly there are different degrees of spiritual vision and knowledge.

TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE: Knowledge which thus falls in soul is of two kinds knowledge concering intellect and concerning religion. The former is also of two kinds-natural knowledge and acquired knowledge. Acquired knowledge is also of two kinds worldly knowledge and next worldly or spiritual knowledge. We understand by knowledge concerning intellect basic natural and necessary knowledge. It is not acquired by blind faith or heresay. It is that which is gained but not known how and from where, for instance the knowledge that the same person cannot stay in two different places at the same time and that the same thing cannot be at the same time old and new. This preliminary knowledge is imprinted in a boy's mind in his earliest years. He does not know wherefrom this knowledge comes. The acquired knowledge concerning intellect is gained by learning. These two kinds of knowledge is called intellect or wisdom.

The Prophet said with regard to the natural intellect from birth: God created nothing more honourable to Him than intellect. With regard to the second kind of intellect on heresay, the Prophet said to Hazrat Ali: 'When the people come close to God by good deeds, you will be able to come close to Him by the

help of your intellect. It is not possible to come close to God by natural intellect. It has to be acquired. So human soul has got power of sight like that of external eyes. As there is power of sight in eyes, so also there is power of as on in human soul. One of its names is intellect or wisdom. The power of vision is a basic ingredient which in not found in a spiritually blind man. It is found only in a person having inner sight though he closes his two eyes or remains in darkness. All things are seen by the eye of knowledge. There is delay in the rise of knowledge till one attains maturity as the tablet of soul does not become prepared then for light of knowledge. Pen is an instrument to depict pictures of knowledge as God says: He taught with pen. He taught men what he knew not-8 : 2Q God's pen is not like the pen of man as His attributes are not like the attributes of man. His pen is not made of material or other things. So there is distinction between inner vision and outer sight.

SOULS VISION AND BLINDNESS: The vision of soul is subtle essence or Latifa with which spiritual things are seen. This essence is like a rider and its eye is like a conveyance. For it, the blindness of the rider is more harmful than the blindness of the conveying horse, that is the blindness of soul is more harmful than the blindness of eye. These two things have got no connection with each other. Still there is some similarity between external sight and internal sight. God explained the sight of soul in this verse: Soul has not disbelieved what it saw-53:11. Here it has been said that the soul has got power of sight God says in another verse: I showed thus the sovereignty of heavens and earth to Abraham -6:75. Here external sight has not been spoken of as others also have been given this power, but there is mention here of internal sight. Opposite to it is the internal blindness God says: Who so is blind in this world will be blind in hereafter-17:71. This is the blindness of soul. This is the narration of knowledge concerning intellect.

KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING RELIGION: This knowledge is acquired by blind faith in the words of the prophets. It can be earned after studying the Quran and Sunna of the Prophet or hearing them For salvation of soal, even though knowledge concerning intellect is necessary, it is not singly sufficient. As for health of body, some measures are necessary, but they are not alone sufficient without their actual application. Special

methods of medicines for cure should be learnt from the physicians. Only intellect is not sufficient. He who calls towards blind faith only without application of intelect is a fool. On the other hand, he who relies on intellect only after giving up the Quran and Sunna is a proud man. The two must be kept together. Education concerning intellect is like food and religious education is like medicine. A diseased man meets with harm if he takes only food after giving up medicine. Similar is the case with diseased soul. Its cure is not possible without profitable medicine of Shariat. The medicine of Shariat is the duties prescribed by the Prophets for purity of soul. He who does not treat his diseased soul by the medicine of divine service as ordained by Shariat and thinks the leanings of intellect as sufficient faces ruin.

SCIENCE IS NOT OPPOSED TO RELIGION: Some think that science is opposed to religion. This is not at all correct. Such a man sets up one learning of Shariat against another. The reason is his failure to co-ordinate the two. As a result, such people go out of religion. Such man is just like a blind man who stumbles down against furnitures of a house and says: Why have these furnitures been kept in the path way? The house owner says: They are in their proper places. It is your blindness which is responsible for your stumbling. This is also the case with one who thinks that science is opposed to religion.

TWO KINDS OF SCIENCE: There are two kinds of science, material and spiritual. Medical Science, Mathematics, and other technical sciences belong to the leanings of this world. The religious sciences are the education concerning soul, God, His attributes and actions. He who makes efforts with regard to the worldly sciences and becomes expert has shortcomings in most cases in being expert in religious sciences. For this reason, Hazrat Ali cited three illustrations to explain this. He said: This world and the next world are like two scales or like the east and the west or like two co-wives. You will find that he who is intelligent in worldly matters and expert in Medical science, Mathematies, Philosophy, Geometry etc. is fool in the religious sciences. He who is experienced in the religious sciences is inexperienced in the worldly learnings. For this reason, the Prophet said: Most of the inmates of Paradise are indifferent.' In other words, they are inattentive in worldly matters. Hazrat Hasan Basari said: We have seen such a people whom you would think if you had seen

them as insane and mad. If they had seen you, they would call you devils. So the worldly educated men deny any wonderful event of religion. God says: Those who do not hope to meet Me and remain satisfied with this world's life get consolation therein. God says" Whoso is heedless of remembering Me and does not wish except this world's life, it is the limit of his knowledge. It is only the Prophets who combined in themselves the knowledge of this world and the next. They were helped by the Holy Spirit and given divine powers.

MEANS OF ACQUIRING SPIRITUAL POWERS: Know, o dear readers, that there are different conditions of knowledge which are not all necessary. Some of them fall suddenly in mind called Ilham and some of them are acquired by efforts. Knowledge not acquired by efforts is of two kinds. One kind of such knowledge is not known from where it comes or how it comes. Another kind of such knowledge comes through an angel who throws it into one's soul. That is called Wahi or revelation. It is revealed only to the prophets. Ilham of the first kind is thrown on the souls of Prophets as well as other religious personalities. In short, human soul is the place of disclosing truths of all things, but the obstacles mentioned earlier stand as screens. Those are screens between Lauhe Mahfuz (Guarded tablet) and the mirror of soul. Picture of everything that will occur up to the Resurrection Day have been preserved in this Guarded Tablet. Real condition of every affair is reflected in the mirror of soul. That is like the picture in front of a mirror. If there is no screen between the two, it is see in the mirror of soul from the Guarded Tablet. The wind of Latifa or essence sometimes removes the screen from the mirror of soul, so as to disclose what is in the Guarded Tablet. Sometimes the future events can be seen in dream. By death, all the screens are removed. In wakeful state also, sometimes the screen is removed provided secret mercy is showered on soul. Then gosts of knowledge spring forth in soul from unseen things. It lasts for a short time. Ilham and Wahi (inspiration and revelation) cannot be obtained by human will. God says: It is not for a man to talk with God except by means of Wahi or from behind the screen or by means of a means of a messenger who reveals with His permission what He wishes.

MERITS OF KNOWLEDGE BY ILHAM: The Sufis love knowledge through Ilham or inspiration. For this reason, they

donot like to have education or read books or hold arguments. They say that the primary source of acquisition of knowledge is the saving of oneself from the condemnable evils, severing all connections and directing all efforts towards God. When it is earned, God Himself becomes the caretaker of human soul. He saves it by enkindling the light of knowledge in soul. When God takes care of his soul, mercy falls in it, light sparkles, breast expands and the secrets of spiritual world are disclosed to him. By God's help, screens of darkness are removed from the upper portion of his soul and real nature of divine affairs comes to him. So it is the duty of God's servant to purify his soul and to make efforts with true and sincere intention. These matters are opened to the prophets and friends of God. Lights flow over their breasts. It is not due to their acquired knowledge by efforts, but it is due to their asceticism, to their full freedom from worldly connections and to full direction of their energies towards God. God becomes for one who becomes for God. To them the first step is to cut off all worldly connections, to make the soul vacant for God, to give up all efforts for family, property, children, houses, name and fame and then to confine themselves in performing compulsory and optional duties and sit in meditation with a mind absolutely free from everything. Their thoughts are centred only in one Being. Even they become free from interpretation of the Quran, Hadis and other books and matters. They sit in lonely places and invoke only Allah, Allah with humility of mind till they reach such a stage, when they give up even the movements of their tongue. Then the influence of their tongue enters their soul which recites Allah, Allah. The pictures of words are then effaced from their souls are only their meanings remain therein.

It is your option to regain this stage. You have got no power to claim mercy of God, rather you may be fit to receive its blowing. At this time, sparkling ray of truth may sparkle in your soul first like attracting electricity but it may not last or it may last. You will then continue to purify your soul and hope to receive God's blessings. This mode is very troublesome and its fruit is time-consuming. If you can gain one stage, it is difficult for you to stay in it as the devil will constantly mislead you. the Prophet said: The heart of a believer is more changing than a pot (of hot water). During this time of efforts and trials, health may deteriorate.

Ilham and acquired knowledge. Know, o dear readers, that the wonderful action of soul is outside the knowledge gained by the senses as soul is outside the knowledge of the senses. So to understand the actions of soul, some illustrations of the material world are necessary. Only two of them are cited here.

FIRST ILLUSTRATION: Take for instance that a well has been dug underneath the ground. There are two ways of pouring waters in it, one way through pipe or canal and another way is to dig the well very deep, so that water may gush forth from its bottom. The second mode is better as water obtained in this way is more pure and lasting. Similarly soul is like a well, knowledge is like water and the five senses are like pipes or canals. Knowledge like water comes to the soul through the help of five organs like pipes or canals. If you wish to get pure knowledge, you shall have to shut up the five senses as you shut up the pipes or canals to get pure water into the well and dig it very deep so that pure water may gush forth from the bottom. The filth in the bottom of well must be cleared to allow pure water to gush forth from the bottom. So also in order to get pure and unadulterated knowledge, you shall have to shut up knowledge gained by the five senses because such knowledge is full of harasses, superstitions and errors.

Question. How can knowledge come out of soul when it remains without knowledge?

Answer. These matters are the wonderful actions of soul. It is difficult to get them from the worldly learnings. It may however be mentioned that real condition of everything was recorded in Lauhe Mahfuz or Guarded Tablet. That was recorded also in the souls of angels who are near God. As an architect prepares a plan before building a house and then builds it according to his plan, so also the Creator recorded His plan in the Guarded Tablet of everything of His reaction in the heavens and earth from first to last. Thereafter He takes out everything according to that prepared plan.

There are four stages of this material world-(1) its existence in the Guarded Tablet before creation of the world; (2) this material world comes into being according to this plan, (3) the world of ideas follows this material world, and (4) the world of intellect follows this world of ideas, that is its pictures fall in

human soul. Some worlds are material and some immaterial. In the immaterial worlds also, one is more spiritual than another. These are strategy of God. Look at the eye-ball. Though it is small, the pictures of the heavens and the earth fall in it. Then it comes within ideas and then it falls in soul. Man does not take cognisance of it till it reaches the soul. Praise be to God who created wonderful power in soul and eyes and He also made soul and eyes of some blind.

So pictures of the world fall in soul sometimes by the help of five senses and sometimes by the help of the Guarded Tablet as picture of the sun falls in eyes. Again picture of the sun falls in water as it falls in eyes. When obstacles are removed from between soul and Guarded Tablet, soul can see many things and thus knowledge arises therefrom. Then no help of senses necessary for such knowledge. It is just like the gushing forth of water from the deep bottom of a well.

TWO DOORS OF SOUL: One door of soul is open towards the spiritual world which is the world of angels and the Guarded Tablet. Another door of soul is open towards the five senses and it is connected with the material world. The former door open to the spiritual world can be better understood from dreams in which one can see some matters of future and past events. One can tell them without the necessity of knowledge gained form his five senses. That door is open to one who remains engaged in solitude in remembrance of God. The Prophet said: the dwellers of solitude have preceded. He was asked: O Prophet of God, who are the dwellers of solitude? He said: Those who have been made pure by the remembrance of God, those whose burdens have been taken down by the remembrance of God and those who will come on the Resurrection Day free of burdens. Then he described their virtues and read these words of God: I kept My face in their front. Do you know in whose front I have kept My face? Does anybody know what I will give them? Then God says: First I throw light in their souls. As a result, they broadcast the news they get from Me.

There is difference in the knowledge of the prophets and friends of God and the knowledge of the learned and the scientists. Knowledge of the prophets and the friends of God come out of that gate of souls which remains open towards the spiritual world, and the knowledge of the learned and the

come out of that gate of souls which remains open towards the spiritual world, and the knowledge of the learned and the scientists comes which remains open towards the spiritual world, and the knowledge of the learned and the scientists comes out of that gate of souls which remains open to the material world through the help of five senses. So it is impossible for the latter to acquire spiritual knowledge. This illustration will make one to understand the difference between the two work.

SECOND ILLUSTRATION: The destination between the actions of the learned and of the friends of God will make one to understand the second illustration, as the learned learn the basic principles of learnings and the bright and pure. The spiritual knowledge of a believer is everlasting as the soul of a believer has got no death. At the time of his death, his knowledge does not go. Hazrat Hasan basari said: Earth cannot eat the place of faith, but it is a means to gain nearness of God. The rank of the fortunate is different according to the degree of Ma'arfat and faith as there is the difference of the rich men is respect of the difference of their riches. So Ma'arfat or knowledge of God is a light without which the believer will not be able to secure divine vision. God says: Their lights will run in their front and their back - 57 : 12.

There is difference in the degrees of light. The Prophet said: If the faith of Abu Bakr is measured with that of the people of the world except the faith of the prophets and apostles, the balance of his faith will be heavier. This like the saying of the man who says: If the lights of all lamps are weighed with the rays of the sun, the rays of the son will be heavier. The light of the faith of the prophets and apostles is like the rays of the sun, the light of the Siddiqs is like that of the moon, the light of the friends of God is like that of the stars and the light of the general believers is like that of a lamp. The rays of the sun illumine the whole world and the light of the lamp gives light to a room. Similarly there is difference in the case of expansion of breasts of the prophets and ordinary believers. For this reason, there is in Hadis that on the Resurrection Day it will be said that whoever has got faith in his heart to the weight of an atom will be taken out of Hell. God said: You will be victorious if you are believers -3 : 38.

In this verge, superiority of the believers over the Muslims has been spoken of. Here the believer means the believer with great spiritual knowledge and not Muslims with outward faith. God says: God will raise those in rank who are believers among you and who have been given knowledge-58:12. Here those who

have got blind faith have been spoken of and then those believers who are learned have been mentioned. God says: Those who have been given learning have got ranks. Hazrat Ibn Abbas explained this verse by saying: God will keep the learned believers over the ordinary believers by seven hundred degrees above, the distance between every two degrees is as the distance between heaven and earth. The Prophet said: Majority of the inmates of Paradise are simple, but the wise will live in the highest Paradise. The Prophet said: The superiority of a learned man over a worshiper is like mine over an ordinary man among my followers, in another narration as the superiority of the full moon over the stars. It can be understood from the above that the difference of the ranks of the inmates of Paradise will be according to the difference of their souls in divine knowledge.

Proof of Shariat about correctness of the ways of the Sufis in gaining spiritual knowledge.

ILHAM AND KASHF: If anything is disclosed to anybody by Ilham or inspiration from unknown source, he is termed Sufi or an ascetic with knowledge of God by the help of correct means. Owing to constant engagement in divine service, spiritual knowledge, is disclosed in soul by way of Ilham or inspiration or Kashf. The Prophet said : God gives one who acts up to his learning such knowledge which was unknown to him before. He gives him Taufiq or grace in his actions, till Paradise becomes sure for him. He who does not act up to his learning roams round his learning. God does not give him grace in what he acts till Hell becomes sure for him. God says: God makes out a way for a man who fears Him and gives him provision from a source he cannot conceive. This means that God takes him out from doubts and various difficulties and gives him knowledge without education and natural understanding without experience. God says : O those who believe, if you fear God, He will give you Furqan—. Furqan means light with which truth and falsehood are distinguished and with the help of which one can come out of doubt. The Prophet used to pray : O God, give me light, increase my light, give me light in my soul, give me light in my grave, give me light in my hearing, give me light in my sight. Even he used to pray : Give me light in my hairs, my flesh, my blood and my bones. When asked about the meaning of the following verse— He is upon the light of God whose heart God has opened for

Islam—29 : 22), the Prophet said : It is diffusion of light, when light falls in soul, heart expands and spreads. The Prophet prayed for Ibn Abbas : O God, give him knowledge of religion and of interpretation. Hazrat Ali said : There is nothing which the Prophet concealed from us.' God gives the knowledge of the Quran to some of His servants. It is not acquired knowledge.

God says: He gives wisdom to whom He likes—12 : 229. This knowledge is said to be that of God's Book. God says: I gave Soloman its knowledge—21 : 79. He specialised Soloman with knowledge. Hazrat Abu Darda'a said: A believer is he who by the help of God's light sees everything from behind the screen. By God. it is true that God casts truth in soul and for that it is disclosed in his tongue. An ancient sage said : Fear the sight of a believer as he looks only by the help of divine light. The clue is found in the following verse : In it there are signs for those who enquire. God says : I make clear the signs to a people with certain faith—12 : 118. The Prophet said: 'Learning is of two kinds—one kind of learning lies concealed in soul and it is the benefiting learning.' One learned man was asked about this and he said : That is a secret matter out of the secret matters of God. God casts it in the souls of His dear servants. Angels or ordinary men do not get clue to it. The learned man is he who learns from his God. This is knowledge from the Almighty called Ilhame Laduni (secret knowledge). God says: I have taught him learning from Myself—18 : 65. Some knowledge comes from God and some knowledge is acquired through the medium of men. It cannot be called secret knowledge which is such a knowledge which arises from the deep bottom of soul without any reason. The Quran and Hadis support it.' The following are some examples of Ilme Laduni or secret knowledge.

(1) Hazrat Abu Bakr at the time of his death said to Hazrat Ayesha : They are both your brother and sister.

At that time, his wife was pregnant and she gave birth thereafter to a daughter. He came to know beforehand that he would have a daughter born to him.

(2) One day Hazrat Omar said at the time of his sermon : O army, towards the hillock, towards the hillock. When he came to know by Kashf or secret knowledge that the enemies were about to kill the Muslim soldiers, he cautioned them and called them to

assemble in the hillock. It is wonderful that the call soon reached the Muslim soldiers.

(3) Hazrat Anas said : I started to meet Hazrat Osman. On the way I met a woman and began to think of here uncommon beauty. When I came to Hazrat Osman, he said : Someone of you has come to me with open sign of fornication in his eyes. Don't you know that look at a strange woman is fornication? Repent or otherwise I shall give you punishment. I said : Does revelation come even after the Prophet of God. Hazrat Osman said: Revelation does not come, but by deep insight everything can be seen.

There are many instance that the sages and saints could tell the inner thoughts of men. Two wonderful events are admitted and cannot be denied by anybody. They are—(1) true dream and(2) Hadis of the Prophet regarding future events.

(1) **True dream.** It reveals the unseen events. When it is possible in dream, it does not become impossible in wakeful state for the following reasons. In sleep, actions of the outward senses remain closed and suspended and soul remains free from the engagements of the material world and then the door of the knowledge of soul remains a little open towards the spiritual world. This occurs sometimes in wakeful state. There are many men who don't hear and see even in wakeful state as they are then remain immerged in their thoughts.

(2) **Prophecies of Prophet.** With regard to the prophecies of the Holy Prophet concerning future events, there are proofs in the Quran. A prophet is he who remains busy for the Quran. A prophet and to whom the real nature of everything is disclosed. A friend of God is he who does not remain busy in the affairs of the people but it is possible for him to know the real nature of things. There are two gates of soul. He who believes in the prophets and in true dreams must believe that there are two gates of soul, one gate is opened to the external senses and another to the spiritual world from the deepest recess of soul and that is Ilham or blowing of Ruh or inspiration or revelation. Between these two gates, the roaming of soul discloses its real nature. As spiritual matters are disclosed in dream, they are disclosed similarly to the prophets and friends of God in different forms. It cannot be understood without spiritual knowledge.

Many angels are ignorant of human mind. A man of Kashf said : An angel came to me and asked me : Disclose to me your insight of Tauhid and secret Zikr or remembrance of God, as I don't write anything of these matters. I asked him : Don't you write compulsory duties? He said : Yes, we write them. It appears from this that Keraman Ketebinor the honoured scribes do not know of secret things and they look only to the outward actions. An Aref or agnostic said : I asked a certain Badl (saint) about direct sight of certain faith. He asked the angels on the right side, left side and breast. They all said : We don't know. Then he gave a wonderful reply which pleased me. He said : I asked my soul (conscience) and it gave me the reply. The soul is more intelligent than the angels. The Prophet also said : There are true news-givers among my followers and Omar is one of them. There is in Hadis Qudsi; God says. He whose news of soul I take, holds My remembrance firm in his soul, I take his charge and become his friend, admonishner and companion. Hazrat Abu Solaiman Darani said : Soul is like a closed tent of which all the gates have been shut up. One look at the door which is opened up towards him. One door out of the doors of soul is opened towards the spiritual world and the Almighty God. That is opened by God fear, abstinence from worldly lusts, greed and efforts. For this reason, Hazrat Omar gave orders to his commanders to remember what the religious persons say, as true matters are disclosed to them. A certain wise man said : God's hand is placed on the wise. They don't say except what God discloses to them. Another sage said. If you are wise, I shall tell you that God discloses some of His secrets to the God fearing men.

DEVIL'S WHISPERINGS IN SOUL: As already stated, soul is a closed tent which has got several doors and from every door, its condition is infused to it. Or soul is like a building to which arrows are thrown from every direction. Or soul is like a preserved mirror in which different pictures are thrown and pictures after pictures are falling in it. Or soul is like a well which as got connection with pipes through which water falls in it. The five senses are its open pipes, and its secret pipes are a man's character and conduct made up of greed, anger etc. Whatever is gained by its five senses falls in soul. When sexual passion rises high on account of over-eating and over-drinking, its effect falls in soul. The soul changes from one condition to another. This effect in soul is called khawater and out of it there grows will and

then intention. Thoughts are good or bad. Good thoughts are called Ilham or inspiration and bad thoughts are called Waswasa or whisperings of the devil.

DEVIL AND ANGEL: They have got generators. The cause or urge which calls towards good is called angel and the cause which calls towards bad is called devil. Latifa or essence gives help to soul in receiving Ilham and this help is called Taufiq or grace. The thing which is accepted from Waswasa or contrivance of the devil is called misguiance. The action of an angel is to give impetus to good actions, to disclose truth and to order is to order for evils and indecencies. Thus God created two opposite agencies. He says: I have created two kinds of everything—13:3. Except God, all things are opposed to one another. God is One and unique who created different things. So soul lives in dispute between angel and devil. The Prophet said : There are two impulses in soul, one impulse of angel which calls towards good and confirms truth. He who feels this impulse should know that it is from God. Another impulse comes from the enemy which leads to doubt and holds out the truth as falsehood and prohibits good works. He who feels this should seek refuge to God from the accursed devil. Then he recited the verse : The devil shows you fears of poverty and enjoins you to do evils—2 : 268.

Hazrat Hasan Basari said : Two thoughts roam over soul-one thought from God and another from the devil. God shows mercy on a servant who stops at the time of the latter thought. If soul follows low desires and passions, the devil gets upperhand. If it follows the habits of angels, it becomes the resting place of angels. For this reason, the Prophet said : There is nobody among you in whom there is no devil. The companions asked : O Messenger of God, does it reside in you too? He said : There is also devil in me, but God helped me to overcome it and it has become submissive to me. It does not order me but good.

The devil works havoc through the medium of sexual passion. Who so follows it finds the devil as his guide. When he returns to Zikr, the devil goes behind and the angel gives incentive to good works. In the battle-field of soul, there is constant clash between the soldiers of the devil and angels till it gets upperhand. After victory, soul remains in peace and the devil becomes submissive. The sage Ata-b-Ziyad said : The devil enters a soul as a thief enters a house. If there is anything in the

house, the thief takes it away. If there is nothing in the house, the thief leaves it. In other words, the devil does not enter a soul which is free from sexual passion and evil desires. God says to the devil : You have got no control over My servants' 16 : 32. He who follows the dictates of passion is a slave of passion and not of God. For this reason, He gave control of the devil over him. God says: Have you seen one who has taken up his passion as hid deity-25 : 44 ? One day Hazrat Amr-b-A's asked the Prophet : O Messenger of God, the devil enters in o my Quran- reading in prayer. He said : He is a devil called Khanzab. When you feel it, seek refuge to God and spit thrice to your left side. He said that God relieved him from it after he did it. There is in another Hadis that there is a devil in ablution called Walhan. He said : Seek refuge from him to God. God says : Seek refuge from the machinations of the devil—16:98. Hazrat Mujahid said by explanation of this verse that it is a broad sign in soul. When one remembers God, the devil flees away disappointed. When he is heedless, the devil takes seat in his soul. God's Zikr and devil's contrivance are like light and darkness which can not live together. The Prophet said : The devil places his trunk in the soul of man. When he remembers God, he goes away, and when he is heedless, he catches hold of his soul.

The Prophet said : When a man does not turn after he reaches his fortieth year, the devil rubs his face with his hands and says. I have wiped the face of one who has got no salvation. The Prophet said : The devil moves in man like the circulation of blood. Make his circulation narrow by hunger. The reason is that hunger cures sexual passion which is the weapon of the devil. So sexual passion surrounds soul. God mentioned the case of the devil saying: The devil said : I will keep sitting in Thy straight path for them. Then I shall run to them by their front, by their back, by their right side and by their left side—7 : 17.

The Prophet said : The devil keeps sitting in different paths for man. He sits in the path of Islam and says: Will you accept Islam after giving up your religion and the religion of your ancestors ? When he disobeys him and accepts Islam, he sits for him-in the path of emigration and says : Will you leave your country after leaving your native land and your properties . When he disobeys him and makes arguments, he sits in the path of Jihad and says : Will you fight ruining yourself and your properties ? He disobeys him and

fights. The Prophet said : If a man dies after performing the above actions, it becomes the duty of God to admit him in Paradise.

Some may ask: What is devil ? Has he got body? If he has got body, how can be enter into the soul of a man? These are useless talks. He who raises such arguments is like the man who, instead of removing a snake from his cloth, argues as to the shape, form, length and breadth of the snake. This is sheer foolishness. When you know that evil thoughts arise in your mind and that they lead you to ruin, it is then clear that they are your enemies of whom you should take care. God says: The devil is your open enemy. 35:6. God says: Have I not told you : Don't follow the devil as he is your great enemy—36 : 61? So everybody should take care of him and not ask about his birth death and other particulars.

THREE KINDS OF THOUGHT: (1) Bad thoughts lead to evils, (2) good thoughts lead to good and it is called Ilham and (3) thoughts mixed with good and bad lead to doubt and it is not known whether they come from angels or devils. The devil cannot call majority of the pious men towards evil deeds. He presents doubt to them in the form of good and that is a great deception which destroys many people. For instance, he advises a learned man to make sermons, and to adorn his lectures with ornamental words. His objects is to throw him to a show of deeds and to generate in his mind greed for name and fame. He is then included among those men about whom the Prophet said : God will help this religion with such men who will have no share in religion. There is in another Hadis that God will help the religion by a transgressor.

DECEPTION OF DEVIL: It has been narrated that the devil once came to Jesus and told him : Say : there is no deity but God. He said : This is a true word, but I will not utter it in obedience to your dictation. Every man should know the source of thought, whether it comes from the angel or from the devil. He should examine it by deep insight and not by dictates of passion and low desires. It will not be disclosed to him except by the light of God-fear and deep knowledge. God says : When a party of devil attack the God-fearing, they remember God—7 : 201. In other words, they return to the light of knowledge.

The means of saving oneself from the machinations of the devil is to shut up the doors of thoughts which are the five senses,

secret sexual passion and worldly connections. The doors of five senses are shut up if he stays alone in a dark room. The secret door of the devil is shut up if he lives separate from his family members and his properties. In this way, the door of ideas remains open in soul. It will not be closed if the soul is not kept engaged in the remembrance of God. Even the devil tries to make him forgetful of it. This fight continues till his death. So long as he lives, he does not get released from the devil. The door of passion, hatred and greed remains open towards the soul.

One day a man asked Hasan Basari : O Abu Sayeed, does the devil sleep ? He smiled and said : If he slept, we would have taken rest. No believer is safe from him. It is true that there are means to get out of him and to curb his power. The Prophet said : A believer drives out his devil as one of you drives his camel in journey. Hazrat Ibn Masud said : The devil of a believer is lean and thin. It is true that there are many doors open for the devil towards soul, but the door of angels is only one which is mixed up with the other doors. To know the path is very difficult without the rays of soul or deep insight which is covered with God-fear.

Hazrat Abdullah-b-Masud said: The Prophet drew up a line in our front and said : This is God's path. He drew up several lines from the right and left sides of that line and said : These are different paths and in each path the devil calls towards it. Then he recited : This is My straight path. Follow it and don't follow different paths. The Prophet said : There was a hermit among the children of Isrial. Once the devil snared a woman and he generated in the minds of her family members that her cure is in the hands of the hermit. They took the woman to the hermit and wanted him to keep her, but he declined to keep her. Being greatly requested, he kept the woman with him for treatment. Then the devil came to the hermit and gave him evil advice. The hermit then cohabited with the woman who become pregnant as a result. Now the devil came to the hermit again and said to him : Kill her, otherwise her family members would come and kill you. If they ask you, you will say that she has died. Then the hermit killed the woman and buried her. The devil then came to the family members of the woman and told them that the hermit killed her as the woman became pregnant owing to his cohabitation with her. When they came to the hermit for the

woman, he said that she had died. Then the devil came to the hermit and said to him : I will save you from them if you obey my command. Prostrate before me twice. When the hermit made prostration before the devil, the devil said : I am now free from you.

DEVIL'S ENTRY INTO SOUL: Know, dear readers, that soul is like a fortress and the devil wishes to enter it and commit havoc. In order to save it from the devil, one must guard the doors of this fort. It is impossible for him to guard them unless he knows the doors which mean his character and conduct.

(1) Anger and sexual passion. A great door for devil's entry is anger and sexual passion. When intelligence is weak, the forces of the devil attack it. Whenever any man gets angry, the devil plays with him. It has been narrated that once the devil came to Moses and said : O Moses, God selected you for prophethood and He talked much with you. I have committed sin and I wish to make repentance. Intercede to my Lord that He may forgive my sins Moses said : Well, I am doing it. He ascended the hill, talked with God and wished to getdown from it. Then he said : Fulfill the promise. Moses said : O Lord, your servant Iblis wishes that his repentance be accepted. God then revealed to Moses : O Moses, your need has been fulfilled. Tell the devil to prostrate before the grave of Adam and make repentance. Then Moses told it to the devil. He got angry at it and said : I did not prostrate before him while he was alive. Shall I now do it after his death ? I have got some duty to you as you have interceded to God for me, One should remember me at the time of three things and I shall not do him any harm—(1) When he gets angry, he should remember that my life is with his soul, my eyes are with his eyes and I move within him like the circulation of blood. (2) When one joins a fight, he should remember that I come down at that time and I remind him of his wives, children and properties, as a result he flees away. (3) One shall not sit by such a woman who can be married. I stay with her as his messenger. I don't stop till I make him fall in danger. From this story, it appears how dangerous are anger and sexual passion.

A certain friend of God asked the devil : Tell me how son hold control over a man. He said : I hold control over him at the time of his anger. Once the devil went to a hermit who asked him which conduct of a man is more helpful to him. The devil said : Haughty temper, because when a man has haughty temper, I overturn him as a boy overturns his toy.

(2) **Hatred and greed.** Another great door of the devil to enter soul is hatred and greed. When a man has got greed for anything, it makes him deaf and blind, as the Prophet said : Your love for anything makes you deaf and blind. It has been narrated that at the time when the Prophet Noah embarked on the boat, he took a pair of everything in it by God's command He found an old man in the boat and asked him: Why have you come? He said : I have come to throw the hearts of your companions into fear, so that their hearts may remain with me and their bodies with you. Noah said : O enemy of God, go out as you are cursed. Then the old man (devil) said to him : I will destroy people with five things and I will not disclose to you two things. God revealed to Noah : You have got no necessity of these things Tell him to disclose to you the two things. Noah informed the devil accordingly. The devil said : The two things are greed and hatred. I have been cursed for hatred. I generated greed in Adam and misguided him.

(3) **Eating with satisfaction.** Another door of the devil is eating to one's heart content though the food is lawful and pure, as it makes sexual passion strong. Once the devil came to the Prophet Ihya who saw his body stout and strong and asked him: O Iblis' what is the reason that you have got a strong body? He replied : The reason is sexual passion. He asked : Have I got anything of it? The devil said : Sometimes you eat with satisfaction and as a result you feel heaviness to pray and make Zikr. Then he said : Have I got anything besides this ? The devil said : You have got nothing else. Prophet Ihya said : I shall never eat to my heart's content. Iblis said : By God, I shall no more give any advice to any Muslim.

HARMS OF EATING WITH SATISFACTION. Eating with satisfaction creates six harms.-(1) God-fear goes out of the heart of such a man, (2) kindness for the people goes out of his heart, (3) he feels difficulty in doing divine service, (4) he does not feel humility when he hears words of wisdom, (5) when he gives sermon, it does not enter into the hearts of the audience and (6) many diseases grow in him.

(4) **Love for fine things** Another door of the devil is love for fine dresses, houses and furnitures. When a man loves fine dresses, he loves to embellish his house and decorate it with fine and beautiful furnitures and things. He loves also to paint his building with variegated colours and its roofs and walls.

(5) **Dependence on people.** Another door of the devil is dependence on the people and to cherish hope to get their favours. For that, he assumes show and artificial methods. Thus greed becomes his deity.

(6) **Hastiness and absence of steadiness. Hastiness** in action and to give up firmness in actions are another door of the devil. The Prophet said : Hastiness comes from the devil and delay comes from God, God says : Man has been created with Hastiness-21 : 37Q. man loves hastiness. God said to His Prophet : Don't be hasty in the matter of the Quran till its revelation does not become complete on you. It has been narrated that when Jesus Christ was born, the followers of Iblis came to him and said : The heads of all idols have fallen down. The devil said : It seems that some event has taken place. Iblis said that Jesus Christ was born and the angels kept him surrounded. He said to his followers : A Prophet is born in the world. without my knowledge, no woman conceived and gave birth to a child. This is an exception. He praised man for hastiness and fickle-mindedness.

(7) **To possess wealth beyond necessity.** Another great door of the devil is to have wealth and properties beyond one's necessity. He who has got the bare necessary things lives in peace but if one possesses surplus wealth, he can not enjoy peace as he wants more and more. When the Prophet was born, the followers of the devil became displeased but the devil said : Give them some time Perhaps God will give them wealth and for that we shall gain upperhand over them. It has been narrated that Jesus Christ once used a piece of stone as pillow. The devil then came to him and said : You have got greed for wealth as you are taking rest on a stone. Then Jesus Christ threw the stone at the devil saying : This is your reward Now think of the man who has got pillows for enjoyment.

(8) **Miserliness and fear of poverty.** Another great door of the devil is miserliness and fear of poverty, as they prevent charity and expense, encourage hoarding and create greed for wealth. Khaisamah-b-Abdur Rahman said : The devil says : Man will hold control over me, but he will not be able to prevail over me in three matters-(1) misappropriation of money unjustly, (2) spending it unjustly (3) and not to pay the dues of others. Hazrat Sufyan Saori said : There is no weapon stronger to the devil than fear of poverty.

(9)**Staying in hats and bazars.** The devil lives in hats and bazars. The Prophet said : When the devil came down to the earth, he said: O Lord, give me –place for habitation. God said : I give you bath room for habitation. The devil said : Give me place for assembly. God said : For that I give you hats and bazars and centres of pathways. The devil said : Give me food. God said : You are given food over which God's name is not taken. The devil said : Give me drink. God said : I give you drink which produces intoxication. The devil said : Give me an inviter. God said : I give you instruments of song. The devil said : Give me a Quran. God said : I give you poetry. The devil said : Give me a book, God said : I give you pictures of animals. The devil said : give me Hadis. God said : I gives you false talk. The devil said : Give me a game. God said : I give you women.

(10) **Love for sect and hatred for opponents.** Another door of the devil is love for mezhab or sect or party and hatred for those who oppose and hold him in contempt. These are such faults for which the religious men are ruined, because to disclose the faults of others is the lastly conduct of man. Those who follow their own sect or party think that it is the best and they cherish hatred for other sects or parties. Some of them support Hazrat abu Bakr though they do not follow him, speak falsehood and create disturbance Had Hazrat Abu Bakr seen them he would have been their first enemy. Some of them support Hazrat Ali but do not follow his character and conduct. At the time of his Caliphate, he purchased a shirt for only three dirhams and cut off his trouser up to ankles. Now his supporters wear silk dresses and eat unlawful earnings. On the Resurrection Day, he will be their first enemy. Those who love Imams Abu Hanifah, Shafeyi, Malek and Ahmad should remember the above principle.

(11) **Ordinary men leaders of religion.** One of the great doors of the devil is that those who have got no learning an education and who do not ponder over the mysteries of creation and actions of God claim to be the leaders of religion. They entertain doubt in the basic principles of religion. The Prophet said : The devil comes to one of you and says : Who created God? When anyone feels that, he should say : I believe in God and His Prophet. This utterance will remove that feeling from him. The Prophet did not recommend argument on the above line as the learned do not face it except the ordinary men.

(12) **Bad opinion about Muslims.** One of the great doors of the devil is bad ideas and opinions about Muslims, God said : O those who believe, give up many conjectures as some conjecture is sin. 49 :12. The devil gives encouragement to backbite one about whom a bad ideal is entertained. The Prophet said : Save yourself from the place of calumny. Even the Prophet saved himself from it. Once the Prophet was in a state of I,tiqaf or seclusion in a mosque. At that time, his wife Sufiyah came to him and went away in the evening. At that time two Ansars came there and after saluting him were about to depart. The Prophet said to them that his wife Sufiyah had come and gone away. He said : The devil runs through the body of a man like circulation of blood. I fear he may enter in you. So to save oneself from the calumny of others is the bounden duty on all.

These are the twelve great doors of the devil through which he enters into the hearts of men and commit tremendous havoc and ruin.

MEANS TO DRIVE OUT THE DEVIL: The means to shut up the doors to prevent the entry of the devil into human soul or heart is by purification of soul from the evil attributes. The devil is like a hungry dog which shall come to you. Drive it out repeatedly. If you, cannot drive a dog take a place of meat and throw it to it and it will go away. Similarly the soul which is free from the food of the devil can be filled up with constant Zikr or remembrance of God, but when passion and greed are strong in soul, the spirit of Zikr roams round the soul. When the soul is heedless of Zikr, machinations of the devil come in. Hazrat Abu Hurairah reported: Once the devil of a believer and the devil of a polytheist met with each other. The devil of the polytheist was stout and strong and dressed with fine dresses and the devil of the believer was lean and thin, disheveled in hairs and laden with dust. The former said to the latter: Why are you lean and thin? He said: I remain with such a man that when he eats, he remembers God and I become hungry, when he drinks and remembers God, I become thirsty. When he puts on dress and remembers God, I go without cloth. When he uses oil and remembers God, I become disheveled in hairs. The devil of the unbeliever said: I remain with such a person who does not remember God in any case and I become his partner in eating, drinking and dresses.

Hazrat Abdur Rahman-b-Abi Laila reported: The devil with a torch light of fire in hand came to the Prophet who was then

engaged in prayer. Gabriel at once came to him and said: Recite the following:

'I seek refuge to Thee with the perfect words which no religious or irreligious man misses, from the evil which enters the world and which comes out of it, which comes down from heaven and which ascends to it, from the trials of day and night, from what roams about during the day and night except what travels with good, O Merciful.' When the Prophet recited it, the torch of fire fell on the body of the devil.

Hazrat Hasan Basari said: I have come to know that Gabriel once came to the Prophet and said: One party of Jinn is making conspiracy against you. So when you enter the evening, read Ayatul Qursi (2 : 255). The Prophet said: Once the devil came to me and quarrelled with me, I caught hold of his neck. By One who sent me as a true messenger, I did not let him go till his saliva of tongue touched my hand. Had not my brother Soloman called me, he would have remained lying down in the mosque. The Prophet said: 'The devil does not walk in a route which is used by Omar.' The cause is that his soul was free from greed. So remove it by sincere Zikr. Be like one who takes medicine after purgation of his bowels which was full of indigested food stuffs. If you want to get the benefit of medicine, first purge your bowels and clear it from congested stools. Similarly clear your soul first from passion and greed and when take the medicine of Zikr. When Zikr enters such a heart which is free from thoughts other than of God, the devil flees away from it, as disease goes away if medicine falls in stomach free of food.

It has been recorded in case of the devil that he will misguide one on whom he has got control and lead him to the endless pit of fire. God-fear and God's remembrance remove the devil. Prayer makes the soul pure. By its help, virtues and faults of soul are disclosed. The prayer of a man whose soul is filled up with passion and greed is not accepted. So it is beyond doubt that the devil will not go from you in that case and his machinations in you will increase, as to use medicine before purgation causes more harm. If you want to be free from the devil, proceed to fill up your soul by God-fear. Then apply the medicine of Zikr. Then the devil will flee away from you as he fled from Hazrat Omar. Hazrat Wahab-b-Monabbah said: Fear God. A certain sage said: Wonder is for one who does not follow the good deeds after

knowing them and follows the devil knowing his transgression. God says: Invoke Me and I will respond to you. You call Him but He does not respond to you. You are making Zikr but the devil does not flee away from you. The reason is that you have lost the condition of Zikr and invocation.

CAUSE OF INVOCATION NOT BEING ACCEPTED: Hazrat Ibrahim-b-Adham was asked: What is the matter with us that we invoke but our invocation is not accepted, although God says: Invoke me and I will accept your invocation - 2 : 186? He said: The cause is that your hearts have died. He was asked: What thing has caused their death? He said: Eight conducts bring the death of heart. (1) You know the duties towards God but you do not do them. (2) You recite the Quran but you do not look to its promise of punishment. (3) You say that you love the Prophet but you do not follow his actions. (4) You say that you fear death but you do not become prepared for it. (5) God says: The devil is your enemy but you take his help in sinful acts. (6) You say that you fear Hell-fire but you keep your body immerged in it. (7) You say that you love Paradise but you do not act for it. (8) When you get up from bed, you throw your sins by your back and disclose the sins of the people, thereby you cause the displeasure of your Lord. How can He respond to your invocation?

Is devil one or many? This knowledge is not necessary for actions. One devil is fixed for a sin and he is called towards it. The Prophet said: Khanjab is the name of the devil in ablution. So the number of devils are many. So also is the number of angels. Every angel is entrusted with an action. The Prophet said: For each believer, 160 angels have been fixed. They remove from him what he can not himself remove. Seven angels have been engaged for eyes only. They remove the injurious things from eyes just as flies are driven out from a pot of honey. If any man is entrusted to himself for the trinkling of an eye, the party of devil would have lifted him away.

It has been reported that when Hazrat Adam was sent down to the earth, he said: O Lord, They have created enmity between me and the devil. If you do not keep me against him. I will have no strength to fight against him. He said: No child will be born to one which will not have an angel with him. Hazrat Adam said: O Lord, give me further sermon. God said: I shall give one punishment for one sin, but I shall give ten rewards for one virtue and more. Iblis said: O Lord, I shall have no strength to fight

against a man whom Thou hast honoured. God said: A child will be born to you along with the birth of a child. The devil said: Give me more power. God said: Your riding armies and infantry will gather together against him and you will be cosharers in their children and in their wealth.

THREE KINDS OF JINN: The Prophet said: God created three kinds of Jinn. One kind of Jinn are serpents, scorpions and worms of earth. Another kind of Jinn roam in sky like air. For another kind of Jinn, there are rewards and punishments.

THREE KINDS OF MEN: God created three kinds of men. One kind of man are like a beasts. God says about this kind of men: They have got hearts with which they do not understand. They have got eyes with which they do not see. They have got ears with which they do not hear. They are like beasts, nay they are more misguided - 17 : 179. Another kind of men have got bodies of men but their hearts are like the hearts of the devil. Another kind of men will remain within the shade of God on the day on which there will be no shade except that of God.

FIGURES OF DEVILS AND ANGELS: The devils and angels have got figures which cannot be seen by men except with the light of prophethood. The Prophet saw Gabriel twice in his form. It took place when the Prophet wanted to see his actual figure. Once he saw him in the cave of Hira covering the space between east and west and at another time near Sitratul Muntaha or farthest lot tree in the night of his ascension to heaven. At other times, he saw him in the form of a man.

EVIL THOUGHTS OF MIND: Machinations of the devil are very subtle. The Prophet said: God will forgive the thoughts of man which arise in mind till he does not disclose them in words or translate them into action. He also said: God says to the angels Keraman Katebin: Don't write when one of My servants intends to commit a sin except when he does it. When he wishes to do a good deed and translates it into action, write for him ten merits therefor. It appears from above that intention to commit a sin is forgiven. On the contrary, if one intends to do good without translating it into action, merits upto seven hundred times are written for him. There is in another Hadis: God says: I forgive one who intends to commit a sin without translating it into action. God says: God will take into account what crosses your mind

whether you disclose it or keep secret. Then He will forgive whom He wishes and punish whom He wishes - 2 : 284.

God say: Don't be busy in what you have no knowledge - 17 : 36. Similarly, eyes, ears and heart of everyone will be asked. It appears from this that actions of mind will be taken into account and ordinarily they will not be forgiven. God says: God will not punish you for useless talks in your oath, but He will punish you for what your hearts have earned. So there are conflicting views whether a man will be punished for thoughts of mind or not. The solution to us is as follows.

Four Stages Of Thoughts: There are four stages for the formation of a thought in order. First, rise of a thought in mind, then inclination of passion, then order of mind and then will and determination. These four stages of a thought come in order. For instance, a woman walks behind a man. It occurs in the mind of the man after seeing the woman that she is walking behind him. This is the sudden rise of thought in his mind. Next he thinks that he should see her again by turning his look at the back. This is the second stage called inclination of mind arising out of first thought. In the third stage, mind gives order to translate this inclination into action and as a result he turns his look towards the woman. Between the second and third stages, there are hurdles like shame or fear. Out of fear or shame, he may not look back. In the fourth stage, there is will and determination to see the woman. It is will with action.

PUNISHMENT: There is no punishment in the first stage as man has got no control in sudden rise of thought in mind. In the second stage also, there is no punishment for the above reason. The Prophet said regarding the above two stages: The thought that naturally arises in the minds of my followers is pardonable. Once Hazrat Osman-b-Mazun asked the Prophet: O Messenger of God, my nature dictates to me to divorce Khaola. He said: Make delay, marriage is my way. He again said: My nature wants me to be important. The Prophet said: Fasting among my followers works like importancy. He said again: My nature wants me to be a hermit. The Prophet said: Stop, Jihad and Haj and asceticism of my followers. He said: My nature wants me to give up meat. The Prophet said: Stop, I love it. There was no will and determination to do these things. For this reason, the Prophet advised mutual consultation before determining a thing.

In the third stage, mind considers whether the previous thought should be translated into action. This condition of mind is situated within willingness or unwillingess. What is subject to one's willingness shall meet with punishment and what is not subject to it shall receive no punishment. In the fourth stage, there is determination to translate the evil thought into action for which there is punishment. But if it is not acted upon, then there is room for doubt whether it will be punished or not. If he fears God and does not do it after repentance, he will get a virtue even though his evil intention is a sin, but to refrain from it out of fear of God is a virtue. He who wills at night that in the morning he will kill a Muslim or commit fornication with a woman and if be dies in that night he will die upon that will and he will be raised up upon that condition. The Prophet said: When two men face each other with their arms, the killer and the killed will both go to Hell. He was asked: O Messenger of God, we understand it in the case of a killer. But why will the killed go to Hell? The Prophet said: The reason is that he intended to kill his companion.

So God will punish for will and intention. Pride, self-praise, show, hypocrisy, hatred and other evil thoughts of mind will surely meet with punishment. Soul is the root and so it is fit for punishment. The Prophet said: God-fear is here, pointing out to the heart or soul. God says: God does not accept blood and meat of a sacrificed animal but He accepts from you God-fear. The Prophet said: The thing which irritates is sin. He said: What gives consolation in mind is virtue though it gives you decision. If a man finds a woman in his bed in darkness and thinks that she is his wife and as such cohabits with her, he commits no sin, but if he cohabits with his wife thinking that she is a strange woman, he commits sin. So every action is not an action of the organs, but an action of the mind.

CONSTANT CHANGE OF MIND: Effect on mind comes from different sources. Mind is a target to which arrows are shot. When anything falling in mind creates some effect, the opposite thing changes that effect. If the devil calls towards passion, the angel removes it from mind, God says: I change their heart and sights. God created human mind as an wonderful thing. When the Prophet took oath, he sometimes said: No, by oath of the Changer of mind. He often used to say, O Changer of mind, keep my mind firm on Thy religion. The companions asked: Do you

fear, O Prophet of God? He replied: Who will give me assurance when the mind is within the two fingers of the Merciful? He changes it as He likes.

THREE EXAMPLES OF MIND: The Prophet cited three examples of mind. He said: Mind is like a sparrow which He changes every moment. He said: Mind is like water in a pot when it is made hot in the matter of change. he said: Mind is like a wing in an open field to be turned over and again by wind. Mind is of three kinds from the point of view of virtues, vices and doubtful things. The first kind of mind is made up of God fear nurtured by divine services and free from bad conducts. Therein fall good thoughts from the unseen treasure house of spiritual kingdom. Wisdom leads the good thoughts falling on it to know the subtle affairs and gives clue to the secret matters of fortune. One knows it by the light of insight and commands that there is no alternative but to translate it into action. The sight of angels falls in such mind. He sees it naturally pure, cleansed by God-fear, nurtured by the rays of intellect or polished by the sparkling light of Ma'arfat or divine knowledge. The angels help such a mind. God says: If a man gives charity, fears God and does good deeds, I shall make his path easy - 5 : 92. Such a mind is blessed with five virtues gratefulness, patience, God-fear, poverty, asceticism, love, containment, reliance on God, good thoughts and other good qualities and becomes free from vices and evils. God speaks of such a mind: Behold, hearts find consolation by the remembrance of God. In another verse: O satisfied soul, return to Thy Lord well-pleased and pleasing Him - 89 : 27.

The second kind of mind is full of passions, low desires and other evils. The doors of the devil remain open towards it and the doors of angels remain shut up against it. Regarding such mind, God says: Have you seen one who takes his passion as his deity? They are like beasts - 25 : 44. It is all the same if you call him towards guidance. He will not hear you.

The third kind of mind is a mixture of good and evil. Sometimes good leads one towards guidance and sometimes evil deeds towards misguidance and error. Intellect helps him in his guidance and misguidance. The forces of the devil and the forces of angels fight in his mind till either of them becomes victorious.

CHAPTER II

GOOD CONDUCT

RIAZAT OR EFFORTS IN THE WAYS OF GOD

Know, O dear readers, that the Prophet of God was the possessor of good character and conduct, Good conduct is half of religion, fruit of the efforts of God-fearing men and an important quality of the worshippers of God. Bad conduct is a ruinous poison, a dangerous wound in brain and much condemned evil. There are many doors of bad conduct which remain open to the fire of Hell as the doors of good conduct are open towards the bliss of Paradise. Bad conduct is a disease of soul which ruins the ever-lasting life. If efforts are necessary to save the temporary body from disease, how much efforts are necessary to save the soul from its diseases which will be everlasting? In the following verse, God says of the treatment of soul: He who purifies it is successful and he who ruins it is ruined - 91 : 2. We shall describe in this chapter the diseases of soul and its cures.

MERITS OF GOOD CONDUCT. Know, O dear readers, that God praised His Prophet and said: You are upon sublime character. hazrat Ayesha said: The Quran is the conduct of the Messenger of God. When a man asked the Prophet about good conduct, he recited the following verse: Take to pardon, enjoin good and keep away from the illiterate - 7 : 199. Then the Prophet explained good conduct and said: Good conduct is this join the tie of relationship with one who cuts it off. Pardon one who oppresses you. The Prophet said: 'I have been sent to complete the best of conducts.' Good conduct will be heaviest of all attributes in the Balance on the resurrection day. Once a man came to the Prophet and said: O Messenger of God, what is religion? He replied: God conduct Then he came to his front and asked: O Messenger of God, what is religion? He replied: Good conduct. Then he came by his left side and asked: What is religion? He replied: Good conduct. Then he came by his back side and asked the same question and he replied the same. Then he said looking at him: Not to be angry is good conduct. The Prophet was asked: What is misfortune? He said: Bad conduct.

Once a man asked the Prophet: Give me some advice. He said: Fear God wherever you are. He said: Give me more advice.

The Prophet said: If you commit an evil do a good action soon after it. As a result, the evil will vanish He said: Give me more advice. The Prophet said: Treat well with the people. He was asked: Which action is best? He said: Good conduct. The Prophet said: God will not throw one into Hell whom He gave good temperament and good appearance. The prophet was once asked. A certain woman fasts all days and prays all nights, but she has got a bad temper an gives trouble to her neighbours by harsh words. The Prophet said: There is no good in her and her place is in Hell. Hazrat Abu Darda'a said: I heard the Prophet say: The first of what will be placed in the Balance is good conduct and benevolence.

When God created faith, it said: Give me strength. God gave it strength through good conduct and benevolence. When God created infidelity, it said: O Lord, give me strength. He gave it miserliness and bad conduct. The Prophet said: God preferred this religion for Him. There will be no good in your religion except good conduct and benevolence. Beware, adorn your religion with these two virtues. The Prophet said: God created good conduct as the best thing He was asked: O Prophet of God, who is best in faith among the believers: He replied: He who is best among them in good conduct. The Prophet said: Don't entertain the people with your wealth, but entertain them with smiling face and goo conduct. The Prophet said: Bad conduct destroys divine service as condiment destroys honey. The Prophet said: So make your conduct good, Hazrat Bara'a-b-Ajeb said: The face of the prophet was most beautiful and his conduct was best. The prophet used to say in invocation: O God, you have made my constitution good. So make also my conduct good. He used to pray most; O God, I pray to Thee for health, peace of mind and good conduct.

The Prophet said: Honour a believer for his religion. Think him superior for good conduct and wisdom. Some desert Arabs once came to the Prophet and asked him: What best thing has been given to men? He replied: Good conduct. The Prophet said: He who will become dearest and nearest to me on the resurrection day will be a man of good conduct. He also said: Don't believe any action good out of the divine services of one in whom one of these matters is not found - (1) God-fear which restrains him from infidelity of God, (2) patience which restrains a fool, (3) or good conduct with which he lives in society.

The Prophet used to say at the beginning of his prayer: O God, guide me to good conduct. Nobody except Thou can guide me towards it. Hazrat Anas said: We were once with the Prophet who said: Good conduct removes all faults as the rays of the sun melt snow. The Prophet said: Good conduct appertains to the fortune of a man. The Prophet said to Abu Zarr: O Abu Zarr, there is no wisdom like efforts and there is no virtue like good conduct. He said: A true Muslim can get for his good conduct and high rank the rank of Saemur Dahar and Qaemul Lail (one who fasts all days and prays all nights). The Prophet said to his companions: I saw last night a wonderful dream. I saw one of my followers sitting upon his knees and there was between him and God only one screen which was removed by his good conduct and so he became close to God.

The Prophet said: A man will get high rank and an honourable place in the next world by dint of his good conduct even though he had little divine services. The Prophet said once to Hazrat Omar: O Omar, by One in whose hand there is my life, the devil does not tread a path which you tread. He said: Bad conduct is such a sin which has got no pardon. Bad idea is such a fault which spreads. The Prophet said: A man reaches the lowest stage of hell for his bad conduct.

Wise Sayings. The son of Loqman asked his father: O father, which fine qualities in his conduct are good? Loqman said: Religion, treatment, shame, good conduct and generosity. When these five qualities are united in a person, he becomes pure, God-fearing and friend of God and is freed from the devil. Hazrat Junaid said: Four virtues raise up a man to highest rank though his divine service and learning are little - (1) patience, (2) modesty, (3) generosity and (4) good conduct. Good conduct completes faith. Hazrat Ihya-b-Ma'az said: Bad conduct is worst evil and if one has got many virtues along with it they do not do him any benefit. Good conduct is a good attribute. If he has got many sins with it, it does not do him harm. Hazrat Ibn Abbas was asked: What is honour? He said: God explained it in the Quran: The most honourable of you is he who is the most God-fearing among you - 49 : 13. He said: He who has got best good conduct among you is the possessor of best quality among you. He said: Every building has got foundation. The foundation of Islam is good conduct.

WHAT IS GOOD CONDUCT: Know, O dear readers, that God said that He created man out of clay and infused His spirit unto him and then the angels made prostration before him. It appears from this that there is connection of body with earth and of soul with the Creator. So human nature is rooted in soul and actions flow out of it. If good actions come out of soul, it assumes good conduct, and if evil actions come out of it, it assumes bad conduct. Hence there are four things - (1) to do good or bad action, (2) to possess power to do there actions, (3) to have knowledge of both, (4) and to become either of the two actions, good and bad, easy. Owing to his attachment to either of them, conduct arises. As a man cannot be called beautiful if he has got only two beautiful eyes but not beautiful face and nose, so he cannot be called to possess good conduct if he has got only one of the above attributes. A beautiful man is he who has got his bodily limbs proportionate and beautiful, so also a man is said to have good conduct if he has got in him all the qualities proportionately.

The nature of soul is divided into four kinds: (1) power of discerning knowledge, (2) power of administration or anger, (3) power of greed and (4) power of adjustment of the above three natures. If knowledge finds full display and becomes mature, truth can be ascertained from falsehood, good from bad. So knowledge is the root of good conduct. God says: Whoever is given wisdom has been given abundant good - 2 : 269. When anger conducts itself under knowledge and Shariat, it can be termed beautiful. When greed becomes subject to wisdom and shame, it can be termed beautiful. Power of adjustment of the natures or judgment is beautiful when anger and greed are guided by wisdom and Shariat. The beauty of anger is called bravery and the beauty of greed is called patience. If anger exceeds the limit of moderation, it is called cowardice. If greed exceeds moderation, it is called hope against hope; and if it goes down, it is called sluggishness. Moderation of greed is good and the two extremes of greed are bad. If wisdom is used immoderately, it is called deception. If it reaches to the extreme, it is called genius. The middle course is called wisdom.

So there are four basic qualities of good conduct knowledge, bravery, patience and power of adjustment or judgment. Other qualities are their branches. Nobody was blessed with all these

qualities except the Prophets. There are differences in those qualities in the persons other than the Prophets. he who is devoid of these qualities is near the accursed evil. The Prophet was sent to complete good conduct and good manners. The Quran praised the believers for possessing these qualities: The believers are those who have got faith in God, His Prophet and then do not entertain any doubt and fight with their lives and properties in the way of God. These are they who are truthful. God described the companions of the Prophet in this verse: They are hard upon the unbelievers but sympathetic to one another - 48 : 28.

CHANGE OF NATURE: It has been argued that nature cannot be changed and this mistaken belief arises out of two reasons.

(1) **The first reason** is that just as figure of a man or his colour can not be changed, or a man can not be made short or long, or a black man cannot be changed to a white man, so also nature cannot be changed. Another reason cited is that inspite of our efforts, sexual passion, anger etc. cannot be uprooted and to make efforts to control them is useless. The answer to these objections is as follows. If nature is unchangeable, then sermons, education and learning would have been useless. The Prophet said: Make your conduct good. This advice would have been meaningless. When the nature of lower animals can be changed by training, human nature can all the more be changed by training, education and habits. All things of the world are made of two elements. Man has got no power over one element, but he has got control over another element. The sun, moon, stars and the external and internal forms of animals cannot be changed. God created another element which may develop into perfection according to certain rules and regulations. For instance a paddy seed, if kept under certain conditions, can develop into paddy plants, but it cannot produce a mango tree or a date tree. Similar is the case with passion, anger, pride etc. If they are kept under rules and regulations and control, they cannot take to the highest degree of progress, but they cannot be uprooted at will. To keep them under control is the cause of salvation.

MEN ARE OF FOUR CLASSES ACCORDING TO NATURE: (1) One class of men are in attentive. They don't distinguish between truth and falsehood and they remain with nature with which they are born. By training, their conduct can be good.

(2) The second class of men can know the evil actions of others but are not habituated to good actions and are prone to evils. They are to give up the habits of evil actions and seeds of good actions are to be sown in their souls. (3) The third kind of men believe bad conducts to be good. (4) The fourth kind of men are bred upon evils. The first kind of men are illiterate to the extreme, the second kind are illiterate and misguided, the third kind are illiterate, misguided and sinners and the fourth kind are illiterate, misguided, sinners and dishonest.

(2) **The second reason** of the above argument is that greed, passion, anger, pride etc. can be uprooted. This is a mistaken Belief. The object of these is to bring them under control and not to uproot these natural propensities. These are necessary for a man. Had he not had greed for food, he would have been ruined. The object is to use it with moderation without going to the extremes. The Prophet said: I am only a human being. I get angry as others get angry. When anything was said to him which was doubtful, he used to get angry, even his two cheeks assumed then reddish colour. God says regarding control of anger - Those who control anger and forgive men. He did not say to uproot it. To take middle course in conduct is better and not the two extremes. Benevolence is a good quality and it is the middle course between two extremes - extravagance and miserliness. God praised it in the following verse: When they spend, they do not squander, nor become miser, but the stand between these two conditions. In another verse: Don't make your hand tied up with your necks, nor spread it to utmost spreading - 17 : 29. To take middle course in green for food is best. God says : Eat and drink, but do not measure. God does not love those who squanders. The Prophet said : The middle course is the best. Heat is a name between scorching rays and snow, free from two extremes. Benevolence is the middle course between extravagance and miserliness and bravery is an attribute between haughtiness and cowardice.

MEANS OF ACQUIRING GOOD CONDUCT. Know, O dear readers, that good conduct is the name of bringing greed and anger under the control of intellect and Shariat. This middle course can be acquired in two ways. The first way to gain this middle course is to make perfect God-given powers and in born qualities. Some men have been created with full intellect and

good conduct and their greed and anger have been placed under control of intellect and Shariat. So these people become wise without education and receive good conduct without training. Prophet Jesus and Prophet Ihya and other prophets are such type of people. Many boys are born opposite to them. They can acquire these virtues by education and training through spiritual guides. The second means is efforts by which these qualities can be acquired. For instance, if anybody wishes to acquire the virtue of benevolence, he must be habituated to make charity inspite of his unwillingness to spend money. Then it will be easy for him to spend. To acquire the virtue of modesty, one is to follow the actions of the humble for a long time. Then it will become easy after a place of time. He who finds pleasure in charity is called a pilanthorpist. the Prophet said : Prayer has been made a doll to my eyes. God says : It (Prayer) is difficult except to the God fearing. The Prophet said : Do divine service with contentment. if you can not do it, it is better to do it with patience inspite of unwillingness.

Acquisition of fortune by habits. to acquire fortune, it is necessary to stick to a thing always and it is not sufficient to hate sins. He must find pleasure in doing good deeds. The longer the life, the more firm and perfect will be its good. When the Prophet was asked about good fortune, he replied : 'To stick to worships throughout life is good fortune.' For this reason, the Prophets and the friends of God disliked death as this world is the seed ground for the hereafter. the longer the life, the more the divine service, and the more the rewards, the more will be the soul pure and the character and conduct will be more strong and firm. The object of divine service is its effect on soul. The object of good character and conduct is to cut off the attachment of the world from soul and to confine them to the love of God. The greatest thing for the soul is its meeting with god. Good habits create light in soul which shows many wonderful things. He who finds pleasure in playing with pigeons stands throughout the day in sun's rays and does not feel tried. He who is accustomed to theft taken pride for acts of theft even though his hands are cut off and he is whipped. Those males who like to be females allow their hairs to grow long, paint the faces and mix with females with female dresses. They taken pride in that. These are acts of habit for which they take pride and find pleasure.

HABITS OF GOOD DEEDS: Similarly, one should grow habits of doing good deeds. If they are done for long and are not given up, pleasure will come as a matter of course like that of the above persons. If a man forms the habit of eating earth, he will find pleasure in eating it. So soul will find pleasure in doing good deeds if one sticks to them for a pretty long time. He who wishes to be a good scribe, he must stick to writing for long. Similarly if one if wishes to acquire the qualities of patience, generosity, modesty etc. he must stick to these habits in actions and behaviours. There is no other means to acquire them except this method. Acquisition of learning is not the result of one day, but of endless days and nights in studies. The natural food of soul is knowledge, divine knowledge and love. Its taste might be changed for some illness of soul, as owing to disease of stomach, there is no taste in food. So diseases of soul must be removed by efforts to acquire divine love and knowledge.

CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE: Only one sin does not bring misfortune. It is the cause of committing sins after sins and disobeying the commands and prohibitions of God. This is also the condition of minor sins. Repetition of a minor sin amounts to a great sin. One black spot falls in soul if a sin is committed and repetition of sins causes repetition of spots in soul. Thereafter the soul becomes completely dark and black. When death suddenly comes to such a man, he dies upon that condition. God says: I have placed screen in their front and screen in their back. Hazrat Ali said: Faith puts a white spot in soul. The more faith increases, the more the white spot increases. When the faith of a man become perfect, his soul is filled up with that light. A black spot falls in the soul of a hypocrite. The more hypocrisy increase, the more the black spot increases. When hypocrisy is disclosed in full, his soul becomes completely dark.

Now you have understood that sometimes good conduct comes with birth, sometimes it is acquired by good deeds and sometimes by following the actions of good and religious people. God does not oppress any man but man himself oppresses his soul and becomes unfortunate. God says: He who does an atom of good will see it, and he who does an atom of evil will see it. 99 : 8. God does not oppress them, but they themselves oppress their souls.

METHODS OF EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CONDUCT: You have come to know now that the middle course in the matter of conduct is good and this keeps the soul pure, and if there is any drifting away from this middle course, it causes disease of soul, just as the middle course is best for preservation of health. The treatment for the diseases of soul is to remove from soul the evil natures and habits and to bring in good natures and habits. Every child remains upon nature or natural inborn qualities, but his parents make him a Jew, or a Christian or a Magian. It is the saying of the Prophet. The child acquires bad habit through his surroundings.

If there is change in the temperament of moderation, it must be understood that the body has got disease. Its medicine is to act to its opposite. For instance, heat can be removed by cold and cold by heat, and fire by water. If one catches cold it can be removed by using hot things. Illiteracy can be removed by learning, miserliness by charity, pride by humility and greed by patience. Similarly the diseases of soul can be removed by the bitter pills of patience and good actions. The diseases of body end with the death of body, but the diseases of soul will last after death as soul is ever-lasting. Appropriate medicine of soul can be prescribed by a spiritual physician or guide. He must first be acquainted with the diseases of his disciple and then cautiously treat them. If he is ignorant of Shariat, he must first teach it to him and the fundamental principles of Islam. If he earns unlawfully, he must be told to give it up. Then when the open sins are removed, the guide should look to the removal of his inner faults and character and conduct. If he has got wealth beyond the limit of his necessity, he should tell him to spend it in charities. If he has got pride and haughtiness, he must be taught to be humble by frequenting bazars and markets with bags for sale and buy. If he finds him too clean, be should tell him to cleanse his own house and kitchen. To worship body is to worship idols. So the ordinary means to remove the diseases of soul is to act against its low desires. God says: He who fears the places of his Lord and restrains hims if from evil passion, his place of abode is Paradise -74:41.

SIGNS OF DISEASES OF SOUL: Know, O dear readers, that every limb of the body has been created for a particular purpose.

If that limb or organ does not do that particular function, it has got disease. If it does that function easily, it is sound. Eye has been created to see. If it does not see, it has got disease. So also the case with ear and nose. Soul has been created for acquiring divine knowledge, love of God and finding pleasure in divine services. God says: I have created man and jinn that they should worship Me - 51 : 56. Man can be distinguished from beast by soul. A man is not free from food, cohabitation, drink and other matters. So is the case with lower animals. The latter has got no soul, but men have got. It has got the quality of recognising the nature of everything. he who knows God loves God. The sign of love of God is that he places love of God above everything in this world. God says in verse - 9 : 24. If your parents, your children etc are dearer to you than God and His Apostle and serving in His way, then wait till God brings about His command.

He who loves anything more than God has got his soul diseased. He is just like a person who loves to eat earth more than bread. This is the sign of the disease of soul. Every soul is diseased except that which loves God. There is hardly any physician of soul at present. The physicians themselves are diseased. A diseased physician can hardly look to his own treatment, not to speak of the treatment of others. The people are now addicted to the love of the world.

TREATMENT OF DISEASED SOUL: The medicine of the disease of soul is to accustom itself to the opposite attribute. If there is disease of miserliness, the medicine to remove it is to give constant charities and spending money. There is limit to charity and expenditure. He who exceeds the limit falls into another disease the fault of extravagance. He becomes then just like the man suffering cold who uses such hot thing which takes him to another trouble. Our object is to gain the limit of moderation avoiding the two extremes. The middle path is the straight path which is more narrow than a hair and more sharp-edged than a sword. He who can remain in the straight path in the world can cross the bridge easily in the hereafter. Majority of people will be inclined to one side or the other. While crossing it, somebody will fall down suddenly. Some will cross it like lightning, God says: There is nobody among you who will cross it. This is your Lord's decree. I shall save those who are God fearing - 19 : 71. The God-fearing are those who tread the straight path or the path

very near it. For this reason, it is our bounden duty to pray to God for seventy times a day for being established in the straight path. God directed us to pray: Show us the straight path.

One day a man dreamt the Prophet and said to him: O Messenger of God, you have said that the chapter Hud has made you grey-haired. Why have you said that? The Prophet recited the verse and said: Be firm on what you have been ordered." So to keep firm on the path is very difficult. Still one should try his utmost to remain on it or very near it. There is no salvation except for good deeds which cannot be achieved without good conduct.

WAYS OF LEARNING EVILS: Know, O dear readers, that God shows evils to one for whom He wishes good. He has got no fear who has got deep insight. When a man can know his faults, he can try to remove them but majority of men remain ignorant of their faults. The man who wishes to see his faults has got four ways.

(1) The first way is to inform his faults and evils to his spiritual guide who can treat his diseases, but this is very rare now a days.

(2) The second way is to appoint a true and pious friend to detect his faults and defects. A religious man takes to this method of finding out his own defects and shortcomings. Hazrat Omar prayed: May God show mercy on the man who points out my defects to me. He asked Hazrat Salman Farsi about his evils. Hazrat Salman told him: I heard that you enjoy two curries at the time of your meal and that you have got two pieces of cloth to put on - one piece for day time and another piece for night time. Hazrat Omar said: Have you heard other than this? He said: I heard nothing except this? Hazrat Salman once asked Hazrat Huzaifa whether he had got any hypocrisy in him? Thus the companions of the Prophet inquired their own faults? Hazrat Daud Tai remained aloof from society. The people once asked him: Why don't you mix with the people? He replied: What benefit shall I derive from them when they conceal my faults and do not inform me? Now the table has turned. He who informs us our faults is our great enemy.

(3) The third way of knowing faults is to gather them from enemies. The attention of the enemies is upon the faults of their adversaries. So there is some basis of their information about one's faults.

(4) The fourth way is to mix with the people and know their faults. If you see their faults, you may think that you have those faults in you as a believer is a mirror to another believer. He sees his defects from the defects of others. Once Prophet Jesus was asked: From whom have you learnt good manners? He replied: Nobody has told me this. When I have seen the faults of the illiterate, I at once gave them up.

PROOF OF SHARIAT ABOUT SOUL AND MEDICINE: If you ponder over what has been described above, your insight will be open and the diseases of soul and their treatments will be disclosed to you in the light of certain faith. If you are unable to achieve it, you should not secede from faith and blind belief. This is the rank of faith as there is a rank of education. Education comes after faith. God says: God raises the rank of those of you who have faith and those having been given learning. To go against passion is the greatest jihad. H who believes that the way to reach God is to act against low desires is included within the group of believers and he who searches the causes of these helps is included within the educated. God says: For one who opposes his low desires, there is the abode of paradise - 79 : 41. God says: They are those people whom God tried by God fear. It has been said by way of explanation of this verse that the love of greed in their hearts has been crushed. The Prophet said: A believer lives in five troubles - (1) he is envied by another believer, (2) a hypocrite harbours hatred against him, (3) an unbeliever fights against him, (4) the devil misguides him, (5) and evil desires dispute with him. When evil desires become enemy, it is compulsory to fight with them.

God once sent revelation to David: Warn your followers from eating the objects of greed, as greed stands as screen to such souls in which there is worldly attachment. Jesus Christ said: Blessed is he who has given up his present greed in hope of getting future promised reward. When some people returned from jehad, our Prophet said: Thanks to you! You have returned from little jehad to a greater jehad. he was asked: O Prophet of God, what is greater jehad? He said: Fight with passion is a greater jehad. The Prophet said: He who makes efforts in divine service is a Mujahed (fighter). He also asked: Keep your soul away from the harmful things and don't run after your evil desires in violation of God's commands. If you do it, it will dispute with you on the

resurrection day. Then your one organ will curse upon another organ if God does not forgive and conceal. Sufyan Saori said: I have not treated a more serious disease than the disease of my soul. It is sometimes for me and sometimes against me.

Hazrat Hasan Basari said: As an unruly horse is to be kept by strong rein, the disobedient soul of man should be kept by a more firm rein. Hazrat Ihya-e-b-Ma'az said: Fight against your passion by the weapon of Riazat or effects. It is of four kinds - (1) to eat little, (2) to sleep little, (3) to speak when necessary and (4) to keep patience at the troubles of the people. There is death of passion because of little food. Sincere intention arises out of little sleep. There is safety from dangers and difficulties on account of few talks. If there is patience at the troubles given by others, one can reach his destined goal. There is no greater difficulty than to keep patience at the time of harsh treatment of the people and the troubles given by them. He also said: The enemies of a man are three - world, devil and passion. So save yourself from the world by renouncing it, from the devil by opposite behaviours and from passion by giving up greed. Hazrat Zafar-b-Hamed said: The learned and the wise said unanimously that happiness can not be achieved without giving up happiness.

It has been narrated that when Jospeh was appointed treasures of Egypt, he was one day travelling in the country with 12000 respectable men riding on horses. At that time, Zulaikha wife of the king of Egypt was seated by the side of the pathway of Jospeh. She said on seeing him: Glory to God who made the kings slaves of sins and the slaves of God worst beings. Joseph said what God dictated to him: God does not destroy the rewards of the doers of God, who fear God and remain patient. The sage Yezid Rakkashi said: O my friends, don't give me cold drink in the world, as I may be deprived of it in the hereafter.

Once a man asked Caliph Omar-b-Abdul Aziz: When shall I talk? He said: When you wish to remain silent. He asked: When shall I remain silent? He said: When you wish to talk. Hazrat Ali said: He who is eager to go to Paradise should remain free from worldly greed. when there is no other alternative for fortune of the next world but to oppose passion and temptation, we should believe in the words of the learned and sages: 'Keep your soul and mind engaged in the knowledge of God, love of God and thoughts about God.' Cut of all connections to achieve these

things. Man has got no power to achieve these things without the company of God.

In the above matters, mankind is of four classes. (1) The minds of one kind of people remain busy with the remembrance of God and do not look to the world except for the bare necessaries of life. They are included within the class of the truthful. This rank cannot be attained without efforts for a long time and without patience for long at worldly pleasures and temptations. (2) The second kind of people remain busy with the worldly affairs and they remember God with tongue and not with heart. They are included within those who are ruined. (3) The third kind of men remain busy with religion and world but religion remains strong in their minds. They will enter Hell but they will soon be rescued therefrom, because religion was strong in their minds. (4) The fourth kind of people remain busy with religion and world but the world is strong in their minds. They shall have to reside long in Hell, but they will be rescued ultimately therefrom.

LAWFUL THINGS: Some say that to enjoy lawful things is lawful, but why should it be a cause of drifting away from God? The answer is that love of the world is the root of all evils. Those things which are outside necessary things are included in the world and they become causes of being away from God. Hazrat Ibrahim Khawaj said: Once I stayed in the hillock of Lakam. I saw there some pome-granates hanging in a pomegranate tree and was inclined to eat some of them I took some and found them sour on testing. Then I threw them and went away. I found a man lying on the way side and many wasps were biting him. I saluted him but he replied and said: O Ibrahim. I wondered how he had come to know of my name and asked him. How do you know me? He said: Nothing is concealed from one who knows God. I said: I understand then that you are a chosen one of God. Why then do you not pray to God to save yourself from the biting of wasps? He said: You are also a chosen one of God. Why they do you not pray to save yourself from the greed of eating pome-granates? The wounds of the sting of wasps will be disclosed in the next world in the form of greed for pomegranates and give you pain, but the sting of wasps will end in this world. Then I went away leaving him. The sage Sarri Sakti said: My mind has been wishing to eat walnut dipped in honey for the last forty years, but I did not eat it upto this date.

If the mind is not kept under control, it is not possible to tread the path of the next world by correcting and purifying it, because it will then desire unlawful things. He who wishes to control his tongue from backbiting and useless talks, it is his duty to keep silent. He should engage in the remembrance of God and other duties of religion till the greed for holding useless talks goes away from him. He should not utter except truth. This is the condition of every passion or low desire. Nature is the same by which lawful and unlawful things are sought and mind should be restrained from unlawful things. If it is not kept under control within the limit of necessary things, it becomes strong. This is a danger of lawful things.

God says: They remain satisfied with the life of the world and feel pleasure at it. God says: This world's life as compared with the next world is only short-lived commodity - 13 : 26. God says: Know that this world's life is but play and amusement, pomp and natural boasting and multiplying among yourselves in riches and children - 53 : 27. Those Sufis who possessed uncommon fortitude said out of experience that possession of wealth makes the mindibard and heinous and keeps it away from the remembrance of God. They found by experience that at the time of sorrows, mind becomes soft, pure and fit for acceptance of grace owing to the remembrance of God. They came to know that there is salvation in long standing sorrows and ruination in case of long standing enjoyment. they gave up the paths of greed with care and knew that accounts will be taken even of lawful things, punishment for unlawful things and rebuke for doubtful things. he who is to render accounts on the resurrection day shall meet with punishment. So to avoid such things, restrain your eyes from the pleasures of the world, and don't enquire what will occur after death. The Prophet said: Love what you wish to love, but you shall have to leave it.

SIGNS OF GOOD CONDUCT: The followings are the signs of good conduct and they are also the qualities of the believers. God says in verse 23 : 1 - The believers will get salvation those who are humble in their prayers, who avoid vain talk, who pay the poor-rate, who guard their private parts except from their wives or whom their rights hand possess,..... those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants, who guard their prayer s- 23 : 1-8. God says: They are those who turn to God,

who serve Him, who praise Him, who fast, who bow, who prostrate, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil and who keep enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil and who keep the limits of God - 9 : 112. God says: Those only are believers whose hearts become full of ear when God is mentioned and His verses are recited to them, they increase them in faith and on their Lord do they rely, those who keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them - 8 : 2. Similar conducts have been expressed in 25 : 63. These are the signs of a believer and should be read very carefully in order to implement them in one's life to acquire the virtues of good conduct.

Hadis: The Prophet said: A believer loves for others what he loves for himself. He said: He who loves God and the hereafter, let him honour his guests. He said: He who believes in God and the hereafter shall honour his neighbour. He said: He who believes in God and the hereafter should utter good words or remain silent. He said: He who is a perfect believer is best in conduct. He said: When you see a believer silent and grave, come close to him as he is full of wisdom. He said: He who is pleased with virtues and displeased with sins is a believer. He said: No believer shall look to his brother Muslim in such a way that gives trouble to his mind. He said: It is unlawful for a Muslim to threaten another Muslim with fear. he said: If two companions consult with each other with trust of God, it is not lawful for one of them to disclose the secrets of another.

Good conduct comprises the following qualities - shame, to consider calamity as little, to wish good of all, truthfulness, little talk, much divine service, little shortcomings, gravity, patience, contentment, kindness, abstaining from begging, curse, rebuke, back-biting, hatred, miserliness, haughtiness and pride, to love for God and hate for God.

These qualities are called good conduct. The sage Eusof b-Ashat said: There are ten qualities of good conduct not to break promise, to do justice, not to take revenge, to recognise evil as sin, not to raise excuse, to bear the harms of others, to restrain passion, to know one's own faults from seeing the faults of others, to come to every one with smiling face and to talk with humility with others.

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD CONDUCT

(1) The Holy Prophet was once walking with Hazrat Anas and met with a desert Arab with a thick cloth on his body. The desert Arab threw the cloth round the neck of the Prophet and began to drag him with force. Hazrat Anas said: As an effect of this forced dragging, spots of the cloth fell upon his neck. The desert Arab said: O Muhammad, give me something of the wealth you have got from God. The Prophet smilingly looked at him and ordered something to be given to him.

(2) At another time when the Quraish was giving the Prophet trouble in the Battle of Uhud and oppressing him, he said: O God, forgive my people, because they are ignorant. Then God revealed this verse: You are upon sublime character - 68 : 4.

(3) Once the sage Ibrahim-b-Adham was travelling through a desert. On the way he met a soldier who asked him: Are you a slave? He said: Yes, I am a slave The soldier said: Can you tell me where is locality here? He pointed out to the grave. The soldier said: I am seeking locality. He said: Graveyard is the place of habitation. The soldier was engaged at this, bound him with a chain and whipped him on his back and took him to a town. The disciples of Ibrahim came to him and the soldier told them about him. They said: His name is Ibrahim-b-Adham and he is the friend of God. Then the soldier fell at his feet and begged pardon from him. On being asked by the people, he said: When the soldier was beating him with stick, I prayed for him paradise. They asked: Why did you pray paradise for him though he oppressed you? He said: I know that I will get rewards in lieu of his oppression. I don't like that one should remain a sinner for me for whom I got rewards.

(4) Once a man invited the sage Abu Osman Hariri and his object was to examine him. When the sage went to his door, he said: Now there is nothing for food. On hearing this, Abu Osman went away. When he went to some distance, the host called him again. When he came again, he said: Return. Then he returned. He called Abu Osman for the third time and the latter also came to him. He said: You have not come in time for food. Then he returned. When he called Abu Osman for the fourth time, the sage came to him and this time also he did not give him food. When he was going, the man feel upon his feet and said with folded hands: I have done it only to

examine you. How good is your conduct! The sage said: You have found in me the conduct of a dog. If a dog is called for food, it comes on call and flees away when driven away.

(5) Once the sage was passing by a bylane when somebody threw some refuges on his head. He removed the refuges from his body and prostrated on the ground by way of gratefulness but didnot take retaliation. He said: If one is fit for Hell, will it not be a cause of gratefulness if refuges only are thrown on him?

(6) Once the sage Sahal Tastari was asked about good conduct. he said: The lowest good conduct is to bear with patience the troubles given by others, not to take revenge, to show kindness on the oppressor, to ask forgiveness for him and to be kind to him.

(7) The sage Ahnaf-b-Qais was once asked: From whom have you learnt patience? He said: From Qais-b-Asem. He was again asked: How did he learn patience? He said: He was once seated in his house when a black female slave was coming to him with a cup of hot roasted meat. Suddenly the cup fell from her hand and fell on the head of his child who died as a result. The female slave was greatly fearful of her master who said to her: You have got no fear. Go, you are free for the sake of God. It was narrated that when the little boys saw the saint Wais Qarni, they used to throw pebbles at him as they thought that he was a mad man. He used to say to them: O dear children, if you are to throw pebbles at all, throw small pebbles at me, so that no blood can come out. If blood comes out, my ablution may break.

FORMATION OF CHILD CHARACTER: Know, O dear readers, that the training of a child's character and conduct is of supreme importance. God entrusted the children in the hands of their parents. The heart of a child is bright like a jewel and soft like a candle and free from all impressions. It is soft like the soft clay in which any seed can grow. If he is given good training of character and conduct, he grows in that condition and acquires fortune both in this world and the next. If he goes to commit sins and lives a life of a beast he is doomed to failure and destruction. God says: 'O those who believe, save yourselves and your family members from Hell fire.' As the parents save their children from the fire of the world, so they should save them also from the fire of Hell of the next world. This means that they should be given training of good conduct and character, save them from bad

company and luxurious habits, delicious dishes and beautiful dresses. When a boy reaches the age of discretion, care should be taken of his character. He gives up then something out of shame and takes up something.

He should be given the training of eating and drinking. The following are some of the rules of eating and drinking (1) Food is to be eaten with the right hand. (2) It should be begun with the recitation of God's name. (3) It should be taken from the side of the dish which is nearest. (4) It should not be taken before others begin to eat. (5) None should look to the eating of others. (6) Food is to be chewed well and not hastily. (7) None should wipe his hand with his wearing garment. (8) Rice or bread without curry should sometimes be eaten. (9) The harms of over eating should be known. (10) Rewards of little food should be known. (11) White cloth and not garments of variegated colours should be put on and not silk cloths. 912) A boy should be directed not to join bad company. (13) He should not be allotted to mix with boys who dress luxuriantly, eat delicious foods and are haughty.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN: The children should be given at the beginning to learn the reading of the Holy Quran and thereafter Hadis or the sayings of the Prophet and the histories and lives of the Prophets, saints and sages. If they don't love them at the beginning of their lives, it would be disastrous for them afterwards, as soft minds get impressions of good or bad in early age. They should not be given literature and poems of love anecdotes. They should not be allowed to sleep at day time as it creates idleness, or to sleep on soft beds till their limbs become strong. They should be given to put on coarse cloth, coarse food and coarse beddings. They should not be allowed to make plays and sports requiring hard labour and should be encouraged to walk on foot. They should be taught in this way: Don't spit before the people, don't cleanse nostrils before them, don't yawn before them, sit with them in a good manner and don't keep them behind, don't sit placing one leg upon another, don't talk too much, don't tell falsehood, show respect to the elders and seniors in age, don't hold indecent talks and don't rebuke and backbite others.

When a boy reaches the age of discretion, he should be told to pray, fast Ramzan and observe the religious duties. When he reaches youth, he should be given education on everything and the reasons for observing religious duties. He should be given

instruction that this world is short lives and the next world is everlasting, that death is imminents that a wise man takes provisions for the next world from this world and he should be given such other profitable teachings.

The sage **Sahal Tastari's** training. He said: When I was three years old, I looked at the prayers of my maternal uncle at night. one day he said to me: Why don't you remember God who created you? I said: How can I remember Him? He said: When you go to bed at night, say three times without moving your tongue: God is with me, God is near me, God is looking at me. I learnt them in this way. Then he said: Recite them seven times every night. After seven days, he said: Recite this eleven times every night. After one year, he said to me: Recite this till you go to the grave and this will be your friend in this world and the next. I learnt the Quran by heart at the age of seven years. At twelve, I began to fast all the year round. I began to follow the following ways in my life. I used to purchase wheat with one dirham per day, prepare food with it, fast the day and break it with that without curry or salt. After one year, I began to fast three days at a time with a break of the next day. Then I used to fast three days at a time and then seven days. Thus I increased my fast gradually to 25 days at a time without any break. In this way, I spent twenty years of my life.

MODES OF RELIGIOUS EXERCISE: He who wishes to acquire the fortune of the next world should observe some rules holding firmly by the Quran. The obstacles in the path of religion should be removed as they may prevent him towards spiritual progress. God says: I have placed a screen in their front and a screen in their back and then I covered them and they don't see - 36 : 9.

There are four walls before a religious disciple - (1) wall of wealth, (2) wall of honour, (3) wall of Mazhabs and (4) wall of sins. The wall of wealth can be removed if it goes out of hand except necessary means to meet bare necessaries of life. The second wall of honour and rank can be removed by shifting from the place of honour and name and fame. The third wall is the differences of opinion in religious matters. Blind faith in one's sect must be removed from mind and one should firmly believe that there is no deity but God and that Muhammad is His Messenger and best guide. The fourth wall is the obstacle of sins.

Repentance for past sins, restraint from acts of oppression and compensation to the oppressed parsons should be taken recourse to remove this obstacle of sins.

When the above four obstacles are removed, he becomes like a person who prepares himself by wash and ablution and becomes fit to observe prayer. Then he requires a spiritual guide to show him the straight path as this path is one only and the paths of the devil are many. Such a man should be kept as it were within the boundaries of a fort, so that the devil may not enter it. This fort of religion has got four walls (1) solitude, (2) silence, (3) hunger and (4) sleeplessness. These four things obstruct the devil to enter the fort.

The object of a disciple is to purify the mind to that he may have glimpse of his Lord therein and attain. His nearness. Hunger reduces the blood of heart and makes it pure and bright. This brightness is the light of mind or soul. Hunger melts the fat of heart and as a result, softness and humility come in. This softness is the key of spiritual insight. Heart becomes hard for obstruction. Whenever the blood of heart is reduced, the circulation path of the devil becomes narrow.

Jesus Christ said: O my disciples, keep your belly hungry that you may see your Lord. Sahal Tastari said: Abdals cannot be raised to their rank without four qualities keeping the belly empty, sleeplessness, silence and solitude from the turmoils of society. It is an open truth that heart becomes bright owing to hunger. This is the fruit of experience. Sleeplessness makes the heart bright, pure and radiant. It increases the brightness gained by hunger and makes it bright like a bright star or a clear mirror and then truth sparkles therein. Sleeplessness is the fruit of hunger and it is impossible to expect sleeplessness with a full belly. Too much sleep makes the heart dead and hard. Sleep to the extent of necessity becomes a means of seeing unseen things. The Abdals eat when pressed by extreme hunger and sleep in case of extreme slumber and talk at the time of extreme necessity. Hazrat Ibrahim Khawas said: It is the unanimous opinion of seventy truthful men that there is too much sleep in case of too much drink.

Silence makes lonely habitation easy, but a man of silence is not free from those who are ready to serve him. As a result, he

speaks without necessity and feels joy in greed. Silence increases power of intellect and encourages God fear. Loneliness saves a man from work, brings ear and eye under control and opens the gates of heart. Knowledge gained through the five senses shall have to be closed first and then the knowledge from the bottom of heart will arise. This knowledge is clear and pure as is the was with the water which comes out of the bottom of a well as a result of excavation. It is not necessary to gain knowledge through the five senses except when required.

CONTROL OF EVIL PROPENSITLES: A sojourner in the path of religion will then advance towards the straight path after the obstructions are removed. propensities of heart are the causes of worldly attachment and obstructions of which one is greater than the other. In other to cut them off, the following rules shall have to be observed. At first, the most easy obstruction shall have to be removed. In other words, love for wealth, name and fame, attachment for the world, inclination towards commission of sins etc. shall have to be given up from the heart which requires sustained, long and continued efforts.

Another way is silent Zikr or remembrance of God. he will prevent his mind to make too much Doa and Darud. His Doa will be one which is the kernel of all Doas - to remember God Mind will not be engaged in remembering God if it is engaged in much Doa and Darud. He will utter 'Allah' Allah' till his utterance by tongue is closed and by heart opened. Mind will then question these things - what is the meaning of Allah? These are the whisperings of the devil. It is of two kinds. One kind is that the devil casts doubt in mind which he shall drive away and remain busy with Zikr of God. God says: When whispering of the devil come to you, seek refuge to God - 7:200. God says: When the party of the devil touch those who fear God, they remember God and they then look on.

Chapter 3

Abridged Version of *Madārij al-Sālikīn (*The Wayfarer's Journey Towards Allah)
Author: Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya
Theme: The book outlines the spiritual journey (*sulūk*) from a state of sinfulness toward closeness to Allah.
It presents a series of stages designed to purify the heart, strengthen worship, and cultivate inner consciousness.

1. Stage of Repentance (Tawbah)

Key points:

- Repentance is the **first step for the wayfarer** who seeks Allah.
- Ibn Qayyim emphasizes that Tawbah is not just asking forgiveness verbally; it includes:
    1. **Remorse over past sins**
    2. **Immediate cessation of sinful acts**
    3. **Firm resolve not to return to sin**
- True repentance **purifies the heart**, weakens satanic influence, and opens the way to further spiritual progress.
- Allah loves the repentant:

"Indeed, Allah loves those who turn to Him in repentance and He loves those who purify themselves." (Qur'an 2:222)

Important Points

- Tawbah is **obligatory for every sinner**.
- Repentance must be **sincere and accompanied by reform**.
- It is the **foundation for spiritual advancement**.

2. Stage of Abandoning Sins (Iqtirāḥ al-Maʿāṣī / Tawakkul)

- After repentance, the wayfarer must **leave sins completely**, whether hidden or open.

- The heart must turn away from worldly attachments that encourage sin.
- Ibn Qayyim warns that **returning to sin hardens the heart**, making it less receptive to divine guidance.
- This stage is also connected to **fear (khawf) of Allah** and **love (mahabbah)** — fear of displeasing Allah motivates leaving sins, while love of Allah motivates devotion.

Important Points

- Sin must be **abandoned with sincerity**, not just superficially.
- Avoiding sin strengthens **taqwa** (God-consciousness).
- The heart becomes **more tender and receptive**.

3. Stage of Taking Heed (Muraqabah / Muhasaba / Taqaddum)

- Taking heed means the wayfarer **becomes vigilant over the heart and actions**.
- Ibn Qayyim explains that the traveler should **continuously monitor oneself**:
    - Examine intentions
    - Assess deeds
    - Correct faults promptly
- This stage requires **self-discipline (mujahadah)** and **awareness of Allah's presence (taqwa)**.
- The wayfarer learns to **guard the heart** against distractions and heedlessness.

Important Points

- This stage marks **maturity in the spiritual path**.
- Regular **muhasaba (self-accounting)** keeps the heart aligned with Allah.
- It prepares the wayfarer for **higher states**, like sincerity (ikhlas) and true reliance (tawakkul).

Key Themes Across These Stages

1. **The Heart is Central:** All stages emphasize purifying and training the heart.
2. **Sincerity and Intention:** Actions without sincerity are ineffective.

3. **Balance Between Fear and Hope:** Fear of Allah's punishment and hope in His mercy must coexist.
4. **Continuous Effort:** Spiritual progress is gradual; vigilance and effort are essential.
5. **Divine Support:** Allah guides the sincere seeker at every stage.

THE STAGE OF REPENTANCE

When a person has gone through the stocktaking stage, he will look ahead to the repentance stage. His earlier stocktaking has made him well aware of what belongs to him and what he owes. He should now approach the repentance stage eagerly as he needs this for life.

Indeed the repentance stage is first among all stages, found also in the middle and at the end. A person undertaking this journey remains in this stage until death. If he moves to another stage, he takes the repentance stage with him there.

Repentance is needed by a person at the beginning and at the end. It is essential for him at the end, but he also needs it at the beginning. Allah says: 'Believers, turn all of you to Allah in repentance, so that you may achieve success'. (24: 31) This verse occurs in a surah revealed in Madinah, and Allah addresses it to the people of faith, the best of His creation, to turn to Him in repentance. These are the ones who have already accepted the faith, showed determined perseverance, migrated for Allah's sake and gone through jihad. Allah makes their success dependant on their repentance, with success being the result of repentance, which is its cause. The verse uses the word 'may' to offer hope, meaning that if you turn to Allah in repentance, you hope to achieve success, because success can only be hoped for by the repentant; (may Allah include us among them).

Allah also says: 'Those who do not repent are indeed wrongdoers'. (49: 11) People are thus divided into two groups: repentants and wrongdoers. There is no third class. Thus a person who does not turn to Allah in repentance is a wrongdoer. Indeed, he is the worst wrongdoer, as he is ignorant of Allah, what is due to Him, his own faults and wrong deeds. In

an authentic hadith the Prophet encourages repentance, saying: 'People, turn to Allah in repentance. By Allah, I turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day'.[6]

Repentance means that a person turns back to Allah, deserting the path of those who incur His wrath and those who have gone astray. This does not occur except through Allah's guidance along the straight path. Such guidance occurs only through Allah's help and through belief in Allah's oneness. Thus, we see that the opening surah, *al-Fātiḥah*, comprises it most perfectly. Thus, a person who gives this surah its dues of knowledge, understanding and experience will know that he cannot recite it as a true servant of Allah without sincere repentance. Indeed, proper and complete guidance along the straight path cannot occur alongside ignorance of sins, nor with persistence in committing them. Ignorance of sins is contrary to knowledge of guidance, while persistent sinning is contrary to seeking such guidance. Repentance only occurs when a person is aware of his sin, acknowledges it and seeks to remove its consequences. A person commits a sin only when he discards the garment of Allah's protection. When such a person realizes that he has discarded it, he feels the risk he is taking and realizes the perilous situation he has put himself into. This is indeed the reality of being left to one's own devices. A person commits a sin only when Allah withdraws His protection, leaving a person to himself. Had He extended His protection to you, sin would not have come near you.

Those who have true knowledge of Allah are all agreed that letting down means that Allah leaves a person to his own devices, while proper guidance means that Allah does not leave a person without help. When He leaves a person to himself, letting him commit a sin, He does so on the basis of His wisdom.

A believer never enjoys the full pleasure of his sinful action, and he is never fully delighted with it. Indeed, he only commits it with an element

6 Related by al-Bukhari, 6,307; Muslim, 2,702.

of sadness in his heart, but the force of desire shuts his feeling out to that element of sadness. Therefore, when a sinner's heart is devoid of that sad element and experiences clear pleasure with what he is doing, he should question himself as to whether he is truly a believer. He should weep because his heart seems dead. Had his heart been alive, he would have experienced a feeling of grief at having committed a sin, and his heart would have felt that grief. Since he had no such feeling, it signals that his heart is dead.

The majority of people are not aware of this point. It is a symptom of something very serious indeed, leading to absolute ruin, unless one tries to remedy the situation through three things: the fear to persist with the sin with no real repentance before death; feeling sorry for what one has missed through disobedience of Allah; and a firm resolve to make amends.

True repentance means regret of what one has done in the past, desisting from it at present and resolving not to commit it again in future. All three are combined at the time when repentance is declared. At that point the repentant regrets his sin, stops doing it and resolves not to repeat it. Thus, the sinner reverts to being a servant of Allah, which is the purpose of his creation. Going back to this position is what makes repentance real. Hence these three elements are the conditions of true repentance.

Proper and accepted repentance has clear signs. One such sign is that the repentant becomes a better person than he was before committing his sin. Another sign is that he remains in fear, never certain of safety until he hears the angels who come to gather his soul giving him the good tidings: 'Have no fear, and do not grieve, but rejoice in the good news of paradise which you have been promised'. (41: 30) Yet another sign is that he feels his heart torn to pieces in his fear and regret. This is proportionate to whether his sin is minor or major. This is how Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah explains the Qur'anic verse that says: 'The structure which they have built will continue to be a source of disquiet in their

hearts, until their hearts are torn to pieces'. (9: 110) He said: 'These are torn to pieces through repentance'.

Undoubtedly, a genuine and strong fear of grave punishment leads to the breaking of one's heart. This is the meaning of the heart being 'torn to pieces', and it is the proper manifestation of repentance. A truly repentant sinner feels his heart torn in regret at what he has done and in fear of its consequences. A sinner's heart which is not torn to pieces in regret in this life will be so torn when everything becomes a reality. He will then see the reward granted to Allah's obedient servants and the punishment meted out to the disobedient. Tearing hearts is bound to happen, either in this present life or in the life to come.

Another element of true repentance is a feeling of humility unlike anything else. It is experienced only by a sinner's heart. It is not the result of hunger, training or pure love. It is beyond all this. It is a complete breaking of the heart in front of one's Lord, engulfing a person from all sides and leaving him in total humility before his Lord. He is like a runaway offender slave who has been chased, captured and brought back. He stands in front of his master realizing that he has no escape, and is liable to grave and unavoidable punishment. He is fully aware that his life, happiness and safety can only be secured through pleasing his master, who is fully aware of all his misdeeds. He loves his master and feels a great need for his kindness. He knows his own total weakness and humility, contrasted to his master's power and high status. All this produces a genuine feeling of submission and humility, which is of great benefit to man. It heals its injury and draws him closer to his Lord. Nothing is dearer to his Lord than this feeling of submission and humility on the part of His servant. He likes to see him humbling himself before Him and fully surrendering himself to Him. He can say nothing better than something along the following lines:

> My Lord, I appeal to You by Your glory and my humility that You bestow mercy on me. I pray to You by Your might and my weakness, by the fact that You have no need of me while I am in

dire need of You. Here is my sinful forelock in Your hand. Apart from me, Your servants are numerous, but I have no Master other than You. I have no refuge or saviour from You other than Yourself. I humbly appeal to You with fear and hope, like one who bows his head before You, with tears in my eyes and humility in my heart to accept my repentance and bestow mercy on me.

A supplication on these lines is indicative of acceptable repentance. A person who does not experience such feelings should question his repentance and try to amend it. True and acceptable repentance is very hard in reality, although it is easy to claim verbally. A genuine person will always find true and pure repentance very hard.

Most people who steer away from physical major sins and abominations actually commit similar, greater or lesser sins, without ever imagining that these are sins to repent of. They look with contempt at those who commit major sins, stressing their own good deeds, holding these as favours they are doing. In effect, they feel that they deserve to be honoured by other people for their own good deeds. Such a feeling is clear to everyone except themselves. Its result displeases Allah far more than the physical major sins committed by the others. It places them further from Allah than the other sinners. Yet they are unaware of their position. Therefore, if Allah causes any of them to commit some sin, or may be a major sin, to shatter his conceit, teach him a lesson to put him in his place so that he feels his own humility and purge him of his boasting of his good deeds, this is in fact an aspect of Allah's mercy. Likewise, when Allah enables the one who commits major sins to turn to Him in genuine repentance, and with an open heart, He is bestowing His mercy on him. Otherwise, both types of people are in great danger.

REFLECTIONS OF A PERSON OF INSIGHT WHEN HE COMMITS A SIN

When a man of insight commits a sin, he may look at five things. One of these is that he looks at Allah's promises and warnings. This will

give him a feeling of fear that will lead him to repentance. Another is that he looks at what Allah has bidden and forbidden. This makes him acknowledge that he has been at fault and admit his sin. The third is that he looks at the fact that Allah has enabled him to commit it, leaving it up to him to commit it. Had He willed, He would have stopped him from doing it. This will give him new types of knowledge of Allah, His names, attributes, wisdom, grace, forgiveness, forbearance and generosity. Such knowledge will urge him to bring his submission to Allah in line with these attributes which cannot be achieved without what they entail. He will know that Allah's creation and command are entwined with His promises and warnings, as well as with His names and attributes. He will realize that this is the effect Allah's names and attributes have on life and that each one of His names and attributes will definitely produce its effect and results.

Thus, the person with insight will find himself beholding blossoming gardens of knowledge and faith, and secrets of divine will and wisdom that are beyond expression in human language. Some of these is that Allah, limitless He is in His glory, is Mighty and determines what He wills. In His complete sublimity, He has determined His servant's action, turning his heart and will as He wishes. He stands in between His servant and his heart, making him willing and intending whatever Allah, Mighty and Wise, wants him to do. This is an aspect of perfect might, and no one is able to do that other than Allah. The ultimate a human being can do to you is limited to your body. The ability to make you willing and intending what He wills you to do belongs only to Allah Almighty.

When man realizes that Allah's might is limitless, feels it at heart and sees it at work, he should give full attention to that instead of sinking into the humility of disobedience. That is far better and more beneficial for him because he will be with Allah instead of being on his own.

To know His power in what He determines means that man becomes fully aware that he is subject to the divine power. He is in Allah's hand, and he has no protection other than Allah's. He cannot achieve anything

without Allah's help. As such, he is humble, subject to One who is mighty and worthy of all praise. It also means that man realizes that absolute perfection, praise, might and without any need whatsoever are attributes belonging to Allah alone, while man is deficient, deserves criticism, is prone to fault and injustice, and needs others. The greater his realization of his own deficiency, humility, faults and poverty, the more he is aware of Allah's might, perfection, praiseworthiness and self-sufficiency. The opposite is also true: his own sin and humility brings home to him Allah's limitless power.

Similarly, the sinner can realize Allah's beneficence as manifested in the fact that while he committed his sin in secret, Allah was fully aware of him and could have made his deed public, but He kept his secret. This is an aspect of His perfect beneficence. One of Allah's attributes is the Beneficent. Such beneficence is granted to the sinner despite the fact that Allah has absolutely no need of him, while the person himself is always in need of Allah and His favours. Realizing the favour Allah has given him by keeping his secret, a believer becomes more aware of Allah's kindness and grace. He thinks less of the disgrace of his sin and turns to Allah, which is far more important for him than deliberation on the ignominy he feels as a result of his sin. Needless to say, focusing one's thoughts about Allah is the most important objective of every human being.

The sinner can also realize Allah's forbearance as He allows him respite. Had He willed otherwise, He could have punished him instantly. One of His attributes is forbearance, and He does not take His servants to task immediately. When the sinning believer is thus well aware of Allah's forbearance, he bears this attribute in mind in his submission.

So when you express your sorrow for disobeying Allah, Allah is so generous as to accept your excuse, and you, the sinner, recognize Allah's boundless generosity. You should then busy yourself with expressing your gratitude and praising Allah. You will also feel a new aspect of your love for Allah. Your love of the One who thanks and rewards you

for your good deed, and then forgives you your disobedience rather than punishes you for it, is much greater than the love generated by thanking you for only your good deed. This is felt in practical life as one's worship replete with repentance following one's sins is of a different type.

Likewise, man can appreciate Allah's favour of forgiveness. Were Allah to take us to task for our sins, He would do so by His absolute right, and He would do it in all fairness, and yet He will still deserve our praise. However, He forgives us our sins by His grace, not because we deserve it. This again requires us to be more grateful and to love Him more and be delighted by His act and company. We should have better knowledge of His attribute, the Much-Forgiving, and include awareness of its significance in our worship to make it complete and more perfect.

Another favour is that Allah grants His servant more space to show his humility and submission in front of Him, and to express his need of His favours. There is an element of arrogance in man, pushing towards assuming lordship. Should man feel able to express it, he would say what Pharaoh said when he declared to his people, 'I am your supreme Lord'. (79: 24) He was able to say this and he did, while other people lack the ability and keep this tendency within themselves. Nothing gets rid of this tendency better than humble submission to Allah.

For Allah's fine names to have their full effects, there is clear need for their causes. His names, the All-Hearing and All-Seeing, require that there should be something to be heard and seen. Likewise, the Provider requires that there should be someone to provide for, and the Merciful requires that someone is in need of and granted mercy. Similarly, names like the Forgiver, the Most Lenient, Acceptor of repentance, Forbearing require that there should be those who are to be forgiven, shown leniency, their repentance accepted and that they be treated with forbearance. It is not possible to make these names and attributes inactive, because they are fine names and attributes of perfection and majestic power. They refer to acts of wisdom, kindness and generosity. Therefore, their

effects must be visible. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was the one who knew Allah best, refers to this as he says: 'By Him who holds my soul in His hand, were you not to sin, Allah would have taken you away and brought into existence others who would commit sins, and appeal for Allah's forgiveness, and He would forgive them'.[7]

Beyond all this, there is the great secret which cannot be expressed in words or pointed out by signs. It is not declared publicly by the caller to faith. It is rather the secret felt by the hearts of Allah's most devoted servants. It, thus, increases their knowledge and love of their Lord, as well as their reassurance by being near to Him and yearning to meet Him. They thus remember Him in all situations, acknowledge His kindness, generosity and fine treatment. They are more cognizant of the secret of servitude, and they better feel the reality of Godhead. This is referred to in a highly authentic hadith in which the Prophet says: 'Allah is more delighted with His servant's repentance when he turns to Him in repentance than anyone of you who happened to be on his mount in a barren land, and it ran away carrying his food and drink. He then lost hope of finding it. He found a tree and lay down in its shade, having despaired of finding his mount. As he was in this situation, he saw it standing by him. He held its reins, then feeling overjoyed, he said: "My Lord, You are my servant and I am Your Lord'. He unwittingly said this out of extreme delight"'.[8]

Such delight is of a nature that man should not ignore. It is only appreciated by one who has special knowledge of Allah, His fine names and superior attributes, and what is due to Him.

Human believers are the best of Allah's creation, and the type He has chosen. He has created man so that He will perfect the blessings He grants him and will continue to bestow His favours on him. Indeed, He gives him of His bounty what is beyond man's hope or imagination.

7 Related by Muslim, 2,749.

8 Related by Muslim, 2,747.

Therefore, man continues to pray to Him to give him, immediately and in the future, open and subtle gifts which can only be given through the love of Allah. Such love of Allah is only achieved through obeying Him, placing Him above all else in one's heart. In return Allah loves him and prepares for him the best that the One who is wealthy, able, generous and loving may prepare for His love, to give it all to him when he comes to Him. He makes a covenant with him, stating His commands and prohibitions and informing him of what brings him closer to Him and better loved by Him, as also what incurs His wrath and renders him unworthy of His love.

The beloved One has an enemy who is the one of His creation He hates most. He has declared his enmity to Allah and tries to persuade His servants to devote their belief, obedience and worship to him, rather than to their true Lord who is the only One who deserves to be worshipped. He appropriated for himself a section of people who support him and devote their allegiance to him, rather than Allah, their true Lord.

If His beloved servant exposes himself to His wrath, committing what He dislikes, deserting Him and befriending and supporting His enemy against Him, closing the way through which He bestows His favours upon him, opening instead the way to His displeasure and punishment, he actually exposes himself to His wrath and to what is contrary to His attributes of kindness, beneficence and generosity. Thus, Allah's wrath and punishment will replace His pleasure and kindness. In other words, man's own deeds invite the opposite of what Allah loves to do and bestow of His preferable attributes of kindness and generosity. However, His loved servant who is favoured with blessings may turn out to be rebellious, denying His favours and siding with His enemies despite being in great need of Him and His help, unable to dispense with it for a moment. While that servant is oblivious of his Master, siding with His enemy and obeying and serving him, he suddenly remembers his Master and what He has bestowed on him of His favours and kindness. He realizes that he cannot do without His help, and that he will eventually return to Him and stand before Him. If he does not willingly go to Him, he is certain to be

brought before Him in the worst of conditions. He therefore pulls himself forcibly from allegiance to Allah's enemy and determinedly returns to Him. When he reaches His gate, he places his face at its threshold and drops down in full humility, weeping and praying sorrowfully that his Master will not deny him His grace. He appeals to Him passionately to accept his repentance. He submits himself to His will and surrenders to His decision. His Master knows that his regret is genuine and His wrath is replaced by His pleasure, and His hardness is overtaken by His mercy. Instead of His blame, deprivation and punishment, He grants him pardon, forbearance and generous gifts. Thus, the repentant servant recalls Allah's preferred and superior attributes. He is delighted with His servant voluntarily and willingly returning to Him, as it reopens the way to His kindness and benevolence.

This is the gist of a well-known incident that happened to one of Allah's devoted servants who was well aware of his Lord. Yet he experienced a period when he was turning away from Him. One day, as he was walking along a street, he saw a door being opened. A young boy came out weeping and appealing, but his mother was behind him, turning him out. When the boy was outside, she closed the door and went in. The boy moved a little distance and stopped to think. He realized that he had nowhere to go other than the home from which he had been expelled. No one would take him other than his mother. He felt very sad but took his way back to his home with a broken heart. He found the door locked. He lay at the door and slept. His mother later opened the door as she needed to go out, and she saw him asleep beside the door. Instinctively, she held her son, hugged and kissed him, with tears in her eyes. She said: 'Son, where will you go away from me? What home do you have other than my home? Have I not told you many times that you must not disobey me. Have I not told you not to force me to withhold my kindness and compassion? Do you not know that I only want what is good for you?' She took him in.

Reflect on the mother's words as she says to her son that through his disobedience, he forces her to withhold her natural kindness and

compassion from him. Reflect also on the Prophet's hadith that says: 'Allah is more compassionate to His servants than a mother to her child'.[9] How can Allah's compassion be compared to that of a mother? When His servant incurs His wrath through his disobedience, he causes Allah's compassion to be withheld. When he repents, he recalls what is more likely from Him.

This is a short explanation of why Allah is delighted with His servant's repentance more than a person who finds his mount and provisions after he has despaired of finding them in a vast barren desert. Beyond this, there is much that can hardly be expressed in words or understood by man. Thus it is when we look at Allah's delight as related to His compassion and benevolence. If we consider it as related to His Godhead and the fact that He is the only One to be worshipped, then we are looking at a much greater and splendid scene which is only witnessed by the privileged few of lovers.

Allah has created people so that they worship Him in a way that combines love, submission and obedience of Him. This is the truth with which the heavens and earth have been created, and the ultimate objective of Allah's creation and command. Its denial is falsehood, which makes creation an idle play which is far from Allah. It becomes aimless, and Allah does not leave man in such a condition. Indeed, Allah loves to be worshipped and obeyed. He would not care for people unless they love and obey Him.

Think of someone you greatly love, yet is taken captive by your enemy who stops all contacts between you and your love. Yet you know that your enemy will inflict all sorts of suffering on your loved one, exposing him to fatal situations. You have more claim to him as you have brought him up, while your enemy has nothing but enmity towards him. Your loved one is then able to escape and unexpectedly arrives at your door, expressing his love and seeking your pleasure. Imagine that he kisses

9 Related by al-Bukhari, 5,999; Muslim, 2,754.

the earth where you step. How much delight will you be in having him back, drawing him close to you?

Imagine this and consider that you have not created your loved one, nor did you bestow favours on him. By contrast, it is Allah who brings His servant into existence, creating him and bestowing His favours on him. He loves to add to and perfect His favours and blessings, so that the individual will show such favours, accept them with thanks and love for the One who has given them. He obeys and worships Him, stands in opposition to and hates His enemy. Allah loves that man disobeys His enemy in the same way as He loves man to submit to, obey and worship Him. Thus the two types of love are combined: the one of obedience and worship and the one of being hostile and disobedient towards His enemy. Therefore, Allah's love is increased, and this is the essence of His delight with His servant.

We have been looking at the reflections of a person of insight after having committed a sin. We mentioned that he looks at five things, and we stated the first two in brief, but discussed the third in detail. The fourth is that he looks at the source of his offence, which is the human soul as it incites towards evil. Looking at this carefully gives him several points for deliberation. The first is that man's soul is ignorant and wrongdoing. From these two qualities emanates every evil speech and action. A person who combines these two qualities of ignorance and wrongdoing is highly unlikely to mend his ways and follow the right course. Therefore, he must exert serious effort to gain beneficial knowledge in order to shed away his ignorance, and to do good deeds to stop wrongdoing. Nevertheless, what man does not know is greater than what he knows, and his injustice is greater than his fairness.

When a person realizes that he has such a soul he should appeal to his Creator to protect him against the evil of his soul, and to inspire it with the knowledge of righteousness, and to keep it pure. He is the best to keep it pure, as He is its Creator and guardian. Man should further pray to Allah not to abandon him to the devices of his soul,

even for a twinkling of an eye, because this is sufficient to send him to ruin. The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught Ḥuṣayn ibn ʿUbayd this supplication: 'My Lord, inspire me with guidance and protect me against the evil of my soul'.[10] When a person knows the truth of the nature of his soul, he realizes that it is the source of every evil, and that whatever goodness it has is a favour Allah has granted him. Allah says: 'Were it not for Allah's favour upon you and His grace, none of you would have ever been pure'. (24: 21)

Another point is that a person who honestly looks at his soul and has an insight about himself and what is due to Allah by right will realize that his bad deeds leave him with no good ones at all. He will thus meet Allah completely bankrupt, because when he looks into his own faults and the negative aspects of his deeds, he realizes that they are not good enough to present to Allah. In other words, his commodity is unworthy to purchase safety from Allah's punishment, let alone gain His rich reward. If any of his deeds or situations is pure and if any point of his time is faultless, he realizes that it is all granted by Allah and a favour He has bestowed on him. It did not come from him and he is not fit to start such a pure deed. He is thus always realizing Allah's favours and his own faults. This is one of the best and most beneficial types of knowledge a person gains. Hence, the most important supplication for forgiveness is the one taught by Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him): 'Oh Allah, You are my Lord. There is no deity except You. You have created me and I am Your servant. I honour my covenant with You and my promise to You as much as I can. I seek refuge with You from the evil of what I have committed. I acknowledge Your Grace and I confess to my sinful actions, so forgive me. Only You forgive sinful actions'.[11]

This supplication for forgiveness acknowledges Allah's Lordship, Godhead and Oneness. It also includes a person's declaration that Allah is his Creator who knows him fully, as he gave him an existence that

10 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 3,483.

11 Related by al-Bukhari, 6,306.

will not fulfil what is due to Allah. Hence, the supplicant admits his deficiency and that he is Allah's servant who is under His control. He cannot escape Him and has none to protect him other than Allah. He further acknowledges his commitment to his covenant with Allah, which includes His biddings and prohibitions as stated by His Messenger. This commitment is acknowledged as man is able to fulfil it, not as is due to Allah, because no human being can fulfil what is due to Him. It is merely the best that a weak human being can do. He further says that he believes in Allah's promise of reward to be given to His obedient servants and punishment to those who disobey Him. Therefore, the supplicant commits himself to honour his covenant and believes in Allah's promise. The supplication also includes seeking Allah's refuge from the effect of his failings in the fulfilment of Allah's orders and prohibitions. Unless He protects him from that evil, man is ruined. The supplicant further acknowledges the grace Allah has granted him and his own sinful actions, appealing to Allah to wipe away his sins and forgive him as He is the only One to forgive sins.

This supplication is described as the most important, the master form of seeking Allah's forgiveness, as it places man in the position of total servitude to Allah. When a man sees his own failings and the deficiency of his actions compared with Allah's favours, what can remain for him of his good deeds?

The fifth and last thing a man of insight looks at is the one who urges him to disobey Allah and paints such disobedience in attractive hues. This is the devil assigned to him. Looking at this devil is useful to man if he considers him his enemy and takes care against his evil. He will be alert to what his enemy tries of tricks of which man may be unaware. In fact his enemy will try hard to overcome him at seven different levels, some harder than others. He will not go down to a lower level until he despairs of entrapping him in the higher and harder one.

The first level is that of disbelief in Allah, religion and the eventual meeting with Allah, and disbelief in Allah's attributes and what Allah's

messengers have taught about Him. If Satan entraps man at this level, he is so happy and becomes less hostile to that person. If man manages to save himself through his insight and Allah's guidance, he continues to have the light of faith.

However, Satan will try again at the second level, which is the level of deviation from the truth. This means having a belief that is at variance with the truth stated in Allah's Book, which He revealed to His Messenger. Alternatively, he persuades him to worship in deviant ways and forms which are totally unacceptable to Allah.

The third level is that of major sins. Satan will try hard to paint these as attractive and persuade man to commit them. He will tell him that he can repent and seek forgiveness later. If a sinner remains safe by Allah's help or by a clear and final repentance, Satan will continue his attempts to entrap him.

The fourth level is that of minor sins, presenting him with many of these. Satan will then say to man: what harm do you fear since you have stayed clear of major sins? Do you not know that minor sins are wiped away by avoiding major sins and doing good deeds? Satan will continue to show man such minor sins as insignificant until he becomes persistent in doing them. In this case, the one who commits a major sin and regrets it fearing its consequences will be better off than such a persistent doer of minor sins. Such persistence is worse than the sin itself. Scholars say that no major sin remains major if it is followed by repentance and seeking forgiveness, and no minor one remains minor if one persists with it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Beware against trifling sins'. He then gave the following example, referring to a group of people who 'stopped at some desert place. They needed wood to light a fire, but it was scarce. Everyone managed to bring a stick until they had plenty. They lit the fire and baked their bread. This is a similar case to trifling sins when they flock against someone, and he is careless of them. Eventually, they spell his ruin'.[12]

12 Related by Ahmad, 3,818.

The fifth level is that of permissible things which are blameless. However, Satan tries to get man to attend to these so that he has no time to add to his good deeds and store them with Allah to improve his situation in the life to come. Satan will try to get such a person to move from being preoccupied with permissible things to abandoning voluntary and recommended good deeds. The next step is to move from this one to neglect some duties. The least that Satan gains at this level is to make a person miss out on good profit and fine reward that guarantees him a high position in the life to come. Had he known the price he is paying, he would not miss out any good deed. What saves a person from the traps of this level is clear insight and fine light. Through this he will appreciate the value of good deeds and try to do more of these. He will also realize that he is like a trader selling good articles and the Buyer is Allah who is most generous and pays handsomely for what is offered. This realization will make man keen to use all his time in what gives him profit and increases his reward from Allah.

The sixth level is that of lesser voluntary types of worship. Satan tries to persuade a person to concentrate on these, showing them as an easy way to earn rich reward, so that he does not attend to other types which are more valuable and earn greater reward. Satan resorts to this tactic only when he despairs of getting a person away from doing good deeds. He now wants him to earn as little reward as possible. Hence, he tempts him to focus on lesser good deeds. He will, thus, be preoccupied with things that are loved by Allah, instead of doing what Allah loves far better and for which He rewards much more richly.

What sort of people stand at this level of Satan's scheming? They are only a scattered minority. As for the majority of people, Satan wins them at the other levels.

People's actions and speech vary in quality and rank. We have already mentioned the hadith in which the Prophet says: 'The master supplication for forgiveness is that Allah's servant says: Oh Allah, You are my Lord. There is no deity except You. You have created

me and I am Your servant. I honour my covenant with You and my promise to You as much as I can. I seek refuge with You from the evil of what I have committed. I acknowledge Your Grace and I confess to my sinful actions, so forgive me. Only You forgive sinful actions'.[13] In another hadith the Prophet says: 'Jihad is the topmost point of this matter [of Islam]'.[14] Only the people of insight and sincerity who are endowed with knowledge are able to pass the test at this level. They are the ones whose journies are successful, as they attach the right value to each action and speech, and give people whatever is rightly due to them.

If a person gets through this level safely, there will remain only one more level his enemy, Satan, can try. Were anyone to be spared this difficulty, the prophets and Allah's messengers would have been spared it, as they were the most honoured of Allah's servants.

The seventh and last level is the one at which Satan sends his servants against the believer to inflict on him all sorts of harm, physical, verbal and spiritual. This sort of war is conducted according to the believer's rank of goodness. The higher his rank the severer is the harm and the more of Satan's army are mobilized against him. The believer has no way of escaping this level. The more he is diligent in following the right path and advocating Allah's message, his enemy mobilizes more of his forces against him and tries to inflict more harm on him. Allah's servant is actually in a battlefield at this level. He is engaged in a war against his enemy for Allah's sake and with Allah's help. As such, his servitude to Allah is that of the elite of believers. It is called 'contention servitude', and it is only identified by people with perfect insight. Allah does not love anything better than His servant's contention against His enemy and his foiling of his schemes.

13 Related by al-Bukhari, 6,306.

14 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2,616; Ibn Mājah, 3,973.

RULINGS CONCERNING REPENTANCE

We will briefly mention some rulings concerning repentance which are widely needed. It is not proper for a believer to be unaware of these.

Turning promptly to Allah in repentance of having committed a sin is obligatory. It is not permissible to delay such repentance, otherwise, the person concerned commits another act of disobedience by delaying his repentance. When a person repents of a sin after having delayed his repentance, he needs further repentance which is hardly ever remembered by people. This is to repent having delayed his initial due repentance. Most people think that once they have repented the committed sin, they have done all that is required of them. Yet a sinner needs to repent having delayed his repentance. Nothing redeems this neglected requirement except a general repentance of all sins, including those of which the person is unaware. Normally, the sins a person is unaware of are more than those he knows to have committed. He is accountable for these if he knows them, and his negligence of both knowledge and action is an act of disobedience, making his sin graver.

Another ruling concerns the status of the repentant. When a sinner has repented his sin, is he back at the same grade he was at before committing the sin or not? Scholars hold different views on this point.

I listened to Ibn Taymiyyah speaking about this difference of views. He said:

> The correct view is that some repentants do not go back to the grade which they had before they were demoted by their sins. Others go back to the same grade, while others still go to a higher grade, attaining a better status than they had before their sins. This was the case of Prophet David. He attained a higher grade after his sin.
>
> This depends on the situation of the repentant after he has declared his repentance and his resolve to always be in obedience, his care to remain free of sin and his diligence in doing what is right. If he

rises to a higher level in these than he was before he committed his sin, he attains a higher grade than he had before his sin and he becomes a better person. If he returns to the same level at which he was earlier, he regains his former status. If he slackens, he will be at a lower grade than before he committed his sin.

An example illustrating these cases cites a person who intends to go to the mosque to join the congregational prayer in the first row. He is heading there paying attention to nothing on his way, but a man pulls him from behind, stopping him. The man wanted to delay or prevent him from joining the prayer. He has two alternatives: he either speaks to this man and gets involved with him until he misses out on the prayer, or he frees himself from this man and proceeds so as not to miss the prayer. The first scenario is akin to the one who does not repent his sin. In the second scenario, the man has three possibilities: 1) He moves on at speed in order to make up for the delay. He may regain it all or may even do better. 2) He moves on at the same speed as before. 3) He feels somewhat complacent as a result of the enforced stop. He thus misses out on being in the first row, or misses the congregational prayer and praying in the early part of the time range of that prayer. Thus is the case of the repentant sinner.

This is further clarified by an important question: Who is better: one who is obedient and has not committed a sin or someone who has genuinely repented of a sin he has committed? Scholars hold different views. Some of them consider that the one who has not committed a sin is better than the one pledging sincere and genuine repentance. They pose several arguments including:

- While the sinner is engaged in his sin, the other moves several steps ahead, thus attaining a higher grade. When the sinner repents, he aims to move on to catch up with his friend who has not committed a sin, while the latter is moving forward. How can the sinner catch up with him?
- The one who has not committed a sin is like a person in an orchard

around which he has erected a firm fence through which the enemy cannot penetrate. The fruits, flowers, greenery and scenery in the orchard continue to grow and blossom. The sinner is one who has made a hole in his fence, enabling thieves and enemies to get through. They played havoc there, breaking branches, damaging its fences, picking its fruits, lit a fire there and spoilt its water source. How long will it take to put it back to its original condition?

Other scholars say that the repentant sinner gains a better situation than the one who did not commit a sin, although the latter may have more good deeds to his credit. They pose the following arguments in support:

- Repentance itself is an act of worship Allah loves much. In the Qur'an, He says: 'Allah loves those who turn to Him in repentance'. (2: 222) Had repentance not been one of the things Allah loves most, He would not have tested the best of His servants with sin.

- Repentance is an act of worship that involves standing humbly before Allah, with full submission and worry, as well as admission of fault and appeal to Allah for forgiveness. This is more pleasing to Allah than many clear acts of obedience, even though the latter may be greater and more plentiful than repentance. Humility before Allah and heartfelt appeal to Him are the essence of worship.

- The humility of one who repents having committed a sin is more genuine than other people. They all express the humility of being Allah's loving servants and their great need of His favours and their genuine love of Allah, but the sinner has the advantage of feeling his heart to be broken by his sin. An old Israelite statement mentions that someone asks: 'My Lord, where do I find you?' Allah answers: 'With those whose hearts are broken for My sake'. Hence, a worshipper is nearest to his Lord during his prostration in prayer, because this is a position of humility before his Lord.

  In a sacred hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) quotes Allah, Blessed and Exalted: 'On the Day of Resurrection, Allah, Mighty and Exalted, will say: "Son of Adam, I fell ill and you did not visit Me". He will say: "My Lord, how should I visit You when You are the Lord

of all the worlds?" He will say: "Did you not know that My servant, so-and-so, fell ill and you did not visit him? Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me with him? Son of Adam, I asked you for food and you did not feed Me". He will say: "My Lord, how could I feed You when You are the Lord of all the worlds?" Allah will say: "Did you not know that My servant, so-and-so, asked you for food and you gave him none? Did you not know that had you fed him you would certainly have found that with Me? Son of Adam, I asked you to give Me something to drink and you gave me none". He will say: "My Lord, how can I give You something to drink when You are the Lord of all the worlds?" Allah will say: "My servant, so-and-so, asked you to give him something to drink but you gave him none. Had you given him something to drink you would have surely found that with Me"'.[15] It should be noted that in the case of visiting a sick person, Allah says: 'Had you visited him you would have found Me with him', while in the cases of feeding the hungry and giving a drink to one who is thirsty, He says: 'you would have surely found that with Me'. There is a subtle difference here. When a person is ill, he feels broken hearted because of his illness. If he is a good believer, with a broken heart, Allah is with him.

This makes clear that Allah's grace and generosity are extended when a person stands in humility before his Lord. A repentant sinner shows this to be genuine. This is clarified by the following argument:

- A sin may be more useful to a person than many acts of worship, if the sin is followed by genuine repentance. This is the meaning of what an early scholar said: 'A person may commit a sin and it causes his admission into Heaven, or he may do some voluntary act of worship and it leads him to Hell'. He was asked how could this be? He said: 'The sin he has committed remains in front of him whenever he stands up, sits down or walks. Every time he remembers it, he regrets having done it, declares his repentance and prays for Allah's forgiveness.

15 Related by Muslim, 2,569.

This will ensure his safety. On the other hand, the one who does a voluntary act of worship keeps his act in front of him, remembering it whenever he stands up, sits down or walks, and admires himself for having done it. It becomes a source of conceit, and as such it spells his ruin. Thus the sin a person commits may lead to good deeds and feelings, such as fear of Allah, being ashamed of what he has done, standing humbly before Allah, with tears in his eyes'. Every type of these is better for Allah's servant than a voluntary act of worship that makes him arrogant, contemptuous of people. Undoubtedly, the repentant sinner is better in Allah's sight and closer to safety than the one who admires his own good deed, feeling proud of it and pressing it as a favour. Even if he verbally says the reverse of such feelings, Allah knows what he actually feels. Such a person may dislike other people if they do not honour him for his deed. Were he to closely examine his feelings, he would find that all this applies to him.

If Allah wants this person to be saved, He lets him commit a sin which breaks him, so that he comes to know his status. He thus spares His servants the harm this person may cause them. He makes him bend his head down so that he is purged of conceit and pride, and of holding his good deed as a favour he does to Allah and His servants. Thus, the sin he commits and the bringing about of this result is better for him than many voluntary good deeds. It is like a bitter medicine a sick person takes to cure his illness. It is like a statement that Allah might have said to Adam when he disobeyed and caused his expulsion from Heaven: 'Adam, I let you commit your sin because I like to show my grace and benevolence to those who disobey me'. This is what the Prophet refers to as he says: 'By Him who holds my soul in His hand, were you not to sin, Allah would have taken you away and brought into existence others who would commit sins, and appeal for Allah's forgiveness, and He would forgive them'.[16]

Adam, were I to make you and your offspring sinless, to whom would I extend My forbearance, pardon and forgiveness? What repentance

16 Related by Muslim, 2,749.

would I accept? Adam, do not panic because I commanded you to leave Heaven. I have created you to dwell in it, but I want you to go down to a life of striving, where you may sow the seeds of righteousness, and irrigate them with your tears. When the seeds bring out their shoots, and these become firm and strong, you may reap the fruits. Adam, a sin that makes you stand humbly before Me is preferable to Me than an act of worship you hold out to Me. Adam, the sighs of sinners are more appealing to Us than glorifications by those who are arrogant.

'Son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. Son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds in the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. Son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as the earth'.[17]

THE MEANING OF SINCERE REPENTANCE

Allah says: 'Believers! Turn to Allah in sincere repentance. It may well be that your Lord will efface your bad deeds and admit you into gardens through which running waters flow, on a day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet or those who believed with him'. (66: 8) Thus, to ensure safety from the evil of sinful action, i.e. wiping them away and the removal of what man dislikes, and also admittance into Heaven, which is what man loves, is dependent on a repentance described in Arabic as *naṣūḥ*, i.e. sincere. Early scholars describe it in different ways, but they all stress the same meaning. ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and Ubay ibn Kaʿb said: 'Sincere repentance means that a person repents having committed a sin and refrains from going back to it, in the same way as milk cannot be put back in the udder'. Muhammad ibn Kaʿb said: 'It has four components:

17 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 3,540.

a verbal supplication for forgiveness, physical refrain from committing sin, a resolve not to repeat it, and deserting bad company'.

In my view, sincerity in repentance includes three things: 1) It should cover all sinful actions without exception. 2) A firm resolve to honour it, so that a person is fully committed to it, without hesitation, tardiness or waiting for anything. 3) It should be free of any element that may detract from its being genuine. It should be undertaken merely for fearing Allah and His punishment and hoping for His reward. It must not be for any worldly outcome such as maintaining one's honourable position or social status, or protecting oneself or one's power or wealth, or inviting people's praise or avoiding their criticism, or sparing oneself people's harm, or for having had all one has desired through his sin, or for being unable to continue with his sin, or for any other reason that detracts from its being undertaken for Allah's sake only.

Sinners have three major rivers in which they may bathe to purge themselves from sin in this present life. If bathing in these rivers does not completely purge them, they will be purged on the Day of Judgement in the river of Hell. These three are the river of sincere repentance, the river of plentiful good deeds that totally remove the burden of sin, and the river of great adversities that are patiently endured. When Allah wishes well for a servant of his, He will let him dip into one of these three rivers. He will then be in a good condition on the Day of Judgement, well purged of sin. He will not need to be dipped into the fourth river.

A person's repentance is winged by two turnings by Allah towards him in mercy, one before that person's repentance and one after it. The first turn by Allah in mercy is one of permission and inspiration to encourage the sinner to repent. As he does so, Allah turns to him again in mercy with acceptance of his repentance and reward for it. Allah says: 'Allah has assuredly turned in His mercy to the Prophet, the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār, who followed him in the hour of hardship, when the hearts of a group of them had almost faltered. Then again He turned to them in mercy; for He is compassionate towards them, ever-merciful'. (9: 117)

Thus, there are turns by man and Allah. Man turns to Allah in repentance, going back to Him after he has moved away, and Allah turns in two ways: one is a turn of permission and guidance, and the other is one of acceptance.

Repentance has a beginning and an end. Its beginning is man's return to Allah's straight path which He has set up for His servants and ordered them to travel along, because it ensures that they earn His pleasure. He says: 'Know that this is the way leading to Me, a straight path. Follow it, then, and do not follow other ways, for they cause you to deviate from His way'. (6: 153) Its end is going back to Him on the Day of Judgement and walking along His path that leads to Heaven. Whoever returns to Allah through repentance in this present life will return to Him in the life to come to get His reward.

MAJOR AND MINOR SINS

Sins are divided into two types: minor and major, according to the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the unanimity of scholars. Allah says: 'If you avoid the most serious of what you are forbidden, We will erase your bad deeds, and shall cause you to enter an abode of glory'. (4: 31)

A *qudsī*, or sacred hadith quotes Allah as saying: 'Son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as the earth'.[18] This must not be understood as meaning that all sins are minor except associating partners with Allah. What it means is that all sins, however great, may be forgiven except the association of partners with Allah. However, it must be realized that mental, or heart actions are closely associated with physical actions. Without such realization, what the Prophet meant will not be understood, but will remain subject to confusion.

18 Related by Muslim in similar wording, 2,687.

It is important to know that total negation of *shirk*, i.e. the association of partners with Allah, is never the case of one who persists in committing sin. It is not possible for one who frequently commits a major sin or persists in the commitment of a minor sin to believe, totally and completely, in Allah's oneness, so as to be totally and completely free of associating partners with Allah. No attention should be given to the argument of a pedantic whose heart is harder than stone when he says: What precludes this? Why is it impossible?

Be aware that persistence in sin leads a person to fear others than Allah, and to love, place his hopes in, stand humbly before and rely on others than Allah. All this may place him deep into *shirk*, or the association of partners with Allah. This is determined by what a person knows of himself, if he has a thinking mind. The disgrace of sin will be felt at heart, leading the sinner to fear others than Allah, and this is *shirk*. He will love others than Allah and seek their help in getting what he wants to have. Thus, his action will not be for Allah or with Allah's help, and this is the meaning of *shirk*.

This leads to the fact that a person who does not associate any partners with Allah is a full believer in Allah's absolute oneness which is manifested by complete love and submission to Allah, fearing Him and placing one's hopes in Him. It is impossible that such a person meets Allah persisting in sins nearly as great as the earth, and without genuine repentance.

It should be noted that the commitment of a major sin may be coupled with a good measure of humility, fear of Allah, and feeling that it is very serious, so as to lower it into becoming minor. By contrast, the commitment of a minor sin may be coupled with impudence, carelessness, complacency and absence of fear of Allah so as to raise it to the level of major sins, and indeed to the gravest of these. This is something that refers to the heart and feeling, which is added to the sinful action itself. Man knows this of himself and of others.

Finally, it should be remembered that the one who truly loves Allah

and does genuine good deeds is kindly treated: he is granted more forbearance and greater forgiveness.

'NO DEITY OTHER THAN ALLAH': ITS IMPORTANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT

The phrase, 'there is no deity other than Allah' is a great statement, and it is much needed by everyone. It radiates light which dispels the clouds caused by sin. However, the strength of its light and how much of the clouds it dispels varies widely, according to the extent of light people receive in their hearts. Some people find the light of this statement shining in their hearts like the sun. For some, it is like a radiant star; for others, like a flaring torch. Some others have it like a light bulb and others like a faint lantern. On the Day of Judgement, the believers will have their light in proportion to how this statement influences them in this life in their knowledge, action and general conduct and situation. Allah says: 'On the Day when you see all believers, men and women, with their light spreading rapidly before them and to their right'. (57: 12)

The greater and stronger the light of this statement, the more it burns out of doubts and desires. It may attain a strength that burns every single doubt and desire. This is the case of a true believer, who knows the meaning of Allah's oneness and who does not associate any partner with Him. Whatever sin, doubt or desire comes near this light will be burnt out. Thus, the horizon of such a believer is well-guarded. A thief who tries to steal some of his good deeds can only snatch something when a believer is heedless, which is a condition that inevitably occurs to humans. When the believer is back in full alertness, he realizes what was taken away. He either gets it back or receives what is better and more through his diligence and fresh good deeds. This is his constant attitude towards thieves, whether human or jinn. He is totally unlike the one who leaves his cupboard unlocked and goes away.

Belief in Allah's oneness is not the mere acknowledgement that Allah

is the only Creator and the Lord of all the worlds. The worshippers of idols in Arabia used to acknowledge this, but at the same time they associated partners with Him. Belief in Allah's oneness includes love of Allah, submission to Him, total obedience, sincere worship and seeking His pleasure in everything one says, does, gives, withholds, loves and dislikes, in a way that places a barrier between a person and the causes that tempt him to disobey Allah and commit a sin. Whoever knows this realizes the meaning of the Prophet's hadiths: 'Allah has forbidden the Fire to burn anyone who says: There is no deity other than Allah, seeking Allah's pleasure'.[19] 'No one who testifies that there is no deity other than Allah and that I am Allah's Messenger will enter the Fire or be touched by it.'[20]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has not made this result dependent on the mere pronunciation of this statement. This is contrary to what is essentially known of the Islamic faith. Hypocrites say it with their tongues, but they remain in the lowest depth of the Fire, well below those who deny it outright. This is confirmed in the Qur'an. What is needed is that a person should say it by heart and tongue. Saying it by heart includes knowledge of this fact and believing in it. This means that the one who says it should know what it negates and what it confirms. He should also know the essential meaning of the Godhead that belongs to none other than Allah, and cannot apply to anyone else. When all this is well settled in one's heart and mind, so that it becomes for that person an undoubted certainty, then entry into the Fire is forbidden, and the Fire is forbidden to burn that person. When the Prophet states that a particular speech will earn a specific amount of reward, he actually refers to a full and complete speech, as we have explained. For example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever says: "Limitless is Allah in His glory and to Him all praise is due" one hundred times in a day, all his sins are wiped away, even though they may be like the foam

19 Related by al-Bukhari, 425; Muslim, 33.

20 Related by al-Bukhari, 128; Muslim, 32.

on the sea's surface'.[21] Needless to say, this reward is not granted for the mere verbal utterance of these phrases.

However, the one who says it verbally, oblivious of its meaning and message, giving it little reflection, but hoping for its reward without realizing its essential meaning and its true weight, will be forgiven a measure of his sins equal to what is in his heart of its significance. Actions are not rewarded on the basis of form and number, but on what is ingrained in one's heart and mind of their essence. Two people may do exactly the same thing, or one person may do something on two different occasions, but the reward for the two actions is as widely different as the distance between heaven and earth. Two people may stand next to each other in prayer, but their prayers are widely different.

Consider the following hadith: 'On the Day of Judgement, Allah will select a man from my community and place him before all creation. He will spread before him ninety-nine records [of sinful actions], each of which is as long as the eyes can see. He will then ask him: "Do you deny any of these? Have my recording angels been unfair to you?" He will say: "No, my Lord". Allah will ask him: "Do you have any excuse?" He will say: "No, my Lord". Allah will say: "This is untrue. You have a good deed kept with us. You shall suffer no injustice today". A card will then be produced in which is written: "I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah; and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's servant and Messenger". Allah will say to the man: "Attend the process of weighing". He will say: "My Lord, what will this card weigh against all these records?" Allah will say: "You shall suffer no injustice". The card will be placed on one scale and the records on the other. The records will be of very little weight while the card will be heavy. Nothing will be heavier in weight against Allah's name'.[22]

The hadith clearly states that one card outweighed ninety-nine records

21 Related by al-Bukhari, 6,405; Muslim, 2,691.

22 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2,639; Ibn Mājah, 4,300.

of sins and the perpetrator is not punished because of the card. It is well-known that every believer in Allah's oneness has a similar card. Yet many of them will enter Hell because of their sins. However, the secret element that gives that man's card its preponderant weight does not apply to others who have similar cards. His card was weighty, while theirs are not.

For a clearer understanding, consider a person whom you know loves you dearly and one who is oblivious of you, paying attention to someone else whom he loves more. Do you remember both or think of them both equally? Let these be your own two sons and their attitudes towards you so different. Do they have the same position in your heart?

A well-known hadith speaks of a person who killed a hundred people, and then repented. When faith took hold in his heart, nothing stopped him from heading towards the village of good people. Death overtook him on the way, but as he was in the throes of death, he was so eager to reach that village. His was genuine faith. Hence, he was, by Allah's order, attached to that village and became one of its people.

A similar case is that mentioned in another hadith which speaks of a prostitute who saw a dog which was licking stones trying to quench its thirst. She felt very compassionate towards the dog, but she had neither means nor help to give the dog a drink. Nor was there anyone to admire her action. Yet, she took the risk of going down a well, filling her shoe with water, exposing herself to immense risk, as she climbed the well, carrying her shoe with her mouth. As she came out of the well, she was so compassionate towards the dog, which is an animal people normally turn away or beat. She held her shoe and placed it before the dog to drink. Needless to say, she did not expect any reward for her action. Her action was sincere for Allah's sake, and this measure of belief in Allah's oneness wiped away her past prostitution, and Allah forgave her that. Such is the value of sincere action in Allah's measure, and this is how He rewards its doer. Yet the actor himself, or herself, is unaware of this elixir, a drop of which is sufficient to turn hundreds of ordinary actions into gold.

TYPES OF ACTIONS TO REPENT

A person is not considered repentant unless he gets rid of sinful actions. There are twelve types of forbidden actions mentioned in Allah's Book, the Qur'an. These are: disbelief, the association of partners with Allah, hypocrisy, wrongdoing, disobedience, sin, aggression, gross indecency, evil, wrongful behaviour, attributing something to Allah in ignorance, and following a way other than His way.

All that Allah has forbidden comes under these twelve types. All that people do is covered by these types, with the exception of following Allah's messengers and implementing their guidance. A person may do most of these, or one of them, and may or may not be aware that his action is of these types. A sincere and genuine repentance means getting rid of these and taking measures to guard oneself against being guilty of them. Needless to say, one needs to know these types in order to get rid of them.

Disbelief is of two kinds: major and minor. Major disbelief is that which incurs the punishment of Hell forever, while the minor kind incurs a lesser punishment, which is short of lasting forever.

The association of partners with Allah is also of two kinds: major and minor. The major kind is to ascribe an equal to Allah. Allah does not forgive this kind except through clear repentance. The minor kind is of different forms, such as false praise of other people hoping for benefit, currying favour with others, swearing by anyone other than Allah.

Hypocrisy is a serious inner condition which a person may have in great measure without being aware of it. It is so subtle that it may go unnoticed by people and may be unfelt by the hypocrite himself. He may claim to further what is right and good when he is in effect supporting what is evil.

There are various signs by which hypocrites can be identified. These are mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and are clearly observed by

believers of insight. Hypocrisy takes hold of them, which is the worst condition a person can have. They are too lazy to implement Allah's commands with sincerity. Hence, they are described in the Qur'an as follows: 'The hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, the while it is He who causes them to be deceived [by themselves]. When they rise to pray, they rise reluctantly, only to be seen by people, remembering Allah but seldom'. (4: 142)

They delay offering obligatory prayers, which are best offered when they become due. They delay offering Fajr Prayer until close to sunrise, and delay ʿAṣr Prayer until close to sunset. When they offer a prayer, they are in haste. Their prayer is a physical, not spiritual exercise. They turn in their prayer like a fox realizing that defeat is its inevitable outcome. They hardly ever attend a congregational prayer. If they pray, they do so at home or in their shops. When any of them is in dispute, he goes beyond limits; when he pledges, he goes back on his pledge; when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he breaks his promise; and he is unfaithful to his trust.

Allah dislikes their acts of worship because of their ill intentions and evil hearts. Therefore, He lets them tarry and stay behind. He dislikes them to draw closer to Himself because they lean towards His enemies. He, therefore, expels them and keeps them at a distance. They turned away from His revelations and He keeps them away, leaving them in misery, rather than happiness. He gave them a fair judgement which makes it impossible for them to be successful, unless they repent. He says: 'Had they really intended to set out [with you], they would surely have made some preparations for that. But Allah was averse to their going, so He caused them to hold back; and it was said to them: "Stay behind with those who stay"'. (9: 46)

The fear of becoming an hypocrite was very genuine among the early Muslims. They knew the short and long of it as well as its details. Therefore, they questioned themselves and feared that it might creep into their hearts. ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said to Ḥudhayfah: 'I ask you

by Allah: did Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) name me among them?' Ḥudhayfah answered: 'No, but I will never testify for the conduct of anyone else'.[23]

Al-Bukhari narrated that Ibn Abi Mulaykah said: 'I met thirty of Muhammad's companions. Everyone of them feared being liable to hypocrisy. None of them claimed that his faith was as strong as that of the Angels Gabriel and Michael'. Al-Ḥasan is reported to have said: 'None but a hypocrite felt immune to it (i.e. hypocrisy), and none but a true believer feared it'.

The plant of hypocrisy grows by the water of two streams: lies and false guise. These streams start from two springs: poor insight and poor resolve. When these four combine, hypocrisy becomes well established. However its structure is built underneath water falls or on the edge of a crumbling precipice. When facts pour forth and consciences are tested, then what is hidden is laid bare and what is in the breasts is laid bare, then every hypocrite will realize that hypocrisy brought him nothing but a mirage. Allah says: 'As for the unbelievers, their deeds are like a mirage in the desert, which the thirsty traveller supposes to be water, but when he comes near to it, he finds that it is nothing. But he finds that Allah [has always been present] with him, and that He will pay him his account in full; for Allah is swift in reckoning'. (24: 39)

Their hearts are deaf to good things, while their bodies try to grab them. Indecency is widespread among them. When the truth is said to them, their hearts are hardened to it. They are attentive by heart and ear to falsehood and perjury. These are indeed the signs of hypocrisy, which everyone should guard against, lest they spell his ruin.

Two kinds of wrongdoing are mentioned in the Qur'an: a general kind mentioned on its own and one that is coupled with disobedience. Allah says: 'Allah has caused [your] faith to be dear to you, and has given it

23 Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān was the only companion of the Prophet to whom the Prophet named all the hypocrites in Madinah. – Editor's note.

beauty in your hearts, and has made hateful to you unbelief, wrongdoing and disobedience of Allah. Such indeed are they who follow the right course'. (49: 7)

Sin and aggression are often mentioned together. Allah says: 'help one another in furthering righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in furthering sin and aggression'. (5: 2)

Wrongful behaviour applies mostly to what is due by right to others and trying to usurp it. Gross indecency refers to obviously repugnant behaviour, rejected by all sound minds. Evil is everything that is naturally rejected by reason and human nature. When such rejection is very strong it becomes a gross indecency.

Attributing something to Allah in ignorance is the sin most strongly forbidden and the gravest. It is indeed the origin of disbelief and associating partners with Allah. All sorts of deviant and erroneous ideas, beliefs and conduct is based on attributing something to Allah in total ignorance.

ASPECTS OF DISOBEDIENCE

1. Animal and carnal desire. This is an image of ignorant people who are not different from animals except in the facts that they stand erect and speak a human language. Their main concern is the satisfaction of their desires however such satisfaction is achieved. They have an animal mentality that does not aspire to that of human beings, let alone that of angels. Their situation is too low to deserve mention. They differ according to the different animals they emulate.

Some of them have a dog's mentality. If he finds a carcass that feeds a thousand dogs, he will try to drive all dogs away from it. All he cares for is to have his fill of whatever food he can get, whether wholesome or foul, carrion or healthy. He is unashamed of any foul thing he does. Some have a donkey's mentality. The donkey is created for hard work

and feeding. The more he is fed, the more work he is given. He is the least intelligent of animals. Therefore, he is given as the example of a person to whom Allah has entrusted His scripture, but he neither learnt nor implemented it. Allah cites the dog as an example of a bad scholar entrusted with Allah's revelations but he discards them: 'He clings to the earth and succumbs to his desires. He may be compared to a dog: no matter how you drive him off, he pants on away, and if you leave him alone, he still pants on.' (7: 176-176)

Some have the mentality of an angry wild animal, always ready to be aggressive, trying to subdue people with whatever means he has at his disposal. Others have the mentality of a mouse, which is naturally evil, trying to ruin things. It is as if they glorify Allah for creating them to cause ruin. Others still have the mentality of poisonous animals like snakes and scorpions. They are the ones who are personally motivated to cause harm and kill.

Some people have the pig's mentality. A pig may pass by wholesome food but does not touch it, yet he eats foul things eagerly. Many people are like that: they listen to good advice and are shown the best behaviour, but they neither learn these nor try to implement them. Yet when they see some wrong action or hear a foul word, they love it and hold on to it. Some have a peacock's mentality. All they are keen upon is to show off and adorn themselves, but it is all superficial. Others have a camel's mentality. He is the animal with the hardest of hearts, one that never forgets a grudge.

The animal with the best mentality is the horse. It is the animal with the best manners. The same may be said about sheep.

In short, the people of this situation care only for their desire and how to satisfy it. They have no further aspirations.

2. The aspect of Allah's wisdom whereby He wills a person to do what He (limitless He is in His glory) dislikes and punishes. Had He so willed, He would have prevented him from doing such. It must be born

in mind that Allah is not disobeyed against His will. Indeed nothing occurs in the universe except by His will. He says: 'Surely all creation and all authority belong to Him. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of all the worlds'. (7: 54)

Such people acknowledge that Allah has not created anything in idle play. There is great wisdom in whatever He has willed of good and bad, obedience and disobedience. One example is sufficient to illustrate this: Had it not been for the act of disobedience done by Adam, when he ate of the forbidden tree, nothing of those things which are dear to Allah would have happened. These include the trial to which He puts His creation, sending His messengers, revealing His books, producing His miracles and wonderful signs and varying them, honouring His devoted servants and humiliating His enemies, showing His justice and bounty, manifesting His might, punishment, pardon, forgiveness, forbearance, and granting victory, honour and power to those who love and worship Him and do His bidding in this life of tests and trials.

3. Belief in Allah's oneness. This aspect involves a testimony that Allah is the Lord, Creator and Master of all things. Whatever He wills is certain to take place and what He does not will never come into existence. No atom can move except by His permission. All creation are subject to His will and within His grasp. Every person's heart is in between His fingers, turning it as He wills. He sets it on the right course or lets it go astray, as He pleases.

4. The situation of success or failure. Scholars of insight agree that success means that Allah does not leave a person to himself, without help from Him. Failure is to withdraw His protection, leaving a person to himself. All mankind move in between these two possibilities, swinging from one to the other. Indeed a person may be in those positions within one hour. He obeys Allah, glorifies and thanks Him for His help and protection, then He disobeys Him incurring His displeasure and becoming oblivious of his Lord. This is due to Allah withholding His protection. Thus, everyone is moving between these two situations

of success and failure. When Allah grants someone success, this is a favour and an act of grace, and when he lets him fail, this is based on His justice and wisdom. He is worthy of praise for both. To Him is due all praise. He never denies a person what is due to him. He may deny him a favour or bounty, as He knows best to whom He grants His favours and bounty.

When a person finds himself in this situation and realizes its importance, he will realize that he is in need of Allah's help in every moment, indeed at every split second. He will know that his faith is not in his own hands. Were Allah to desert him for a moment, all his structure and beliefs would crumble down. He is held in position by the One who stops the heavens from falling down on earth. Hence, he will always pray to Him: 'My Lord, You are the One who turns hearts as You please. Let my heart always hold firmly to Your religion. My Lord, You are the One who sets hearts on their courses. Let my heart always remain steady in Your obedience'. His supplication will be: 'My Lord, the Ever-Living, the Creator and Master of the heavens and the earth, the One full of majesty, granting grace, there is no deity other than You. I appeal to You by Your mercy that You set right all my affairs and that you do not leave me to myself, or to anyone of Your creation, for a single moment'.

Success in this sense means that Allah wills to give His servant what will make him a good person, making him able to do what pleases Him, loving and willing to do it, preferring it to other things, and making him hate what displeases Allah. This is all He does while the person concerned is its recipient. Allah says: 'Allah has caused [your] faith to be dear to you, and has given it beauty in your hearts, and has made hateful to you unbelief, wrongdoing and disobedience of Allah. Such indeed are they who follow the right course. [All this is indeed part of] Allah's bounty and favour. Allah is all-knowing, wise'. (49: 7-8)

The following example of success and failure has been given by way of illustration: A certain king sent a messenger to the people of one of his townships, giving him a letter to deliver to its people. In his letter he

tells them that the enemy is about to attack their town, destroy it and kill its population. He sends them money, transport, provisions, equipment and guides. He advises them to leave their town immediately and come to him with the guides he sent them. They thus have all they need for their safety and journey. The king then gives special instructions to a number of his subordinates, saying to them: 'Go to these people, naming a number of the inhabitants of that town, and bring them out of their homes and bring them here. Force them to come if they are reluctant. Let the others choose what they do'. His men went to the people he named and brought them by force to him. The rest stayed behind. The enemy attacked the town and killed most of its population or took the rest captive. The question is: was the king unjust to those people. It is true that he favoured some people with a special care which he did not extend to the rest? Was he obliged to treat the whole population in that way? Or, was he free to choose whom he gave special favour to?

5. Allah's names and attributes. This is one of the most important aspects, and it is broader than the earlier ones. What we are presented here is the knowledge that the whole of existence is related to Allah's fine names and superior attributes, in its very creation and the commands it is subject to. Indeed, the whole universe is part of the effects and operation of these names and attributes. Whatever Allah determines and decrees reflects His great wisdom and superior signs. He presents Himself to His servants through His names and attributes, causing them to love, remember, glorify, thank and worship Him through His fine names. Every one of His names invites its particular worship: its knowledge and practice. The one who is best in worship is the one who worships Allah through all His names and attributes known to mankind. Addressing his worship through one of Allah's names should not stop him from serving Allah through His other names as well. Thus, serving Allah by His name, *al-Qadīr*, i.e. the Able, should not overshadow serving Him by his names, *al-Ḥalīm al-Raḥīm*, i.e. the Forbearer, the Ever-Merciful. Nor should serving Allah under His name, *al-Muʿṭī*, i.e. the Giver, stop a person serving Him under His name, *al-Māniʿ*, i.e. the

Withholder. To serve Allah, the Forgiver, i.e. *al-ʿAfuwwu, al-Ghafūr*, does not preclude serving Him as *al-Muntaqim*, i.e. the Avenger. His attributes of friendship, beneficence, care, kindness should be served alongside His attributes of justice, might, pride and greatness, etc.

This is the practice of those who are most perfect in their journey towards Allah. It is derived from the Qur'an itself, as Allah says: 'Allah has the finest names, so appeal to Him by these'. (7: 180) The word 'appeal to' includes request, praise and worship. Limitless is Allah in His glory, He calls upon His servants to know Him through His names and attributes, praise Him as required by these, and to worship Him as they indicate. Allah, Mighty and Exalted, loves what His names and attributes entail. As He is All-Knowing, he loves whoever is endowed with knowledge. He is generous and loves everyone who is generous. He is of perfect beauty and loves beauty. In reference to some of His attributes, we know that He loves forgiveness, righteousness, forgiveness, gratitude, perseverance, forbearance. Because He loves repentance of sin and forgiveness, He created those who are bound to commit some of what He dislikes and hates, so that they will turn to Him in repentance and He will accept it and forgive them their sins.

6. Increase of faith. This is one of the best scenarios and the one most witnessed by people of knowledge. The effects of good and evil deeds on hearts, bodies and properties are seen everywhere in our world. They are known to everyone of sound mind, whether believers or not, righteous or wrongdoers.

A person sees this within himself and in others. When he reflects on it, he will strengthen his faith in what Allah's messengers have said and in reward and punishment. This is an aspect of justice which we behold in this world, and the punishments visited on us in this life are indicative of what is more serious, but these are only understood by people of insight. Someone told me that when he commits a sinful action and does not follow it with repentance, he expects its adverse consequences. When such consequences occur, he hastens to declare, 'I bear witness that

there is no deity other than Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger'. This is clear evidence of genuine belief. When a truthful person tells you that when you do such-and-such, you are bound to experience such adverse consequences; and then whenever you do something of the sort, the adverse effects follow, your belief in his truthfulness will be increased. This does not apply to everyone. Most people allow their sins to mask their insight and they do not recognize the resulting evil effects.

A person's heart may have the light of faith, but the temptation of sins and acts of disobedience are very strong. He sees both these: the light of his faith and the strong temptation available. He is like one in a boat at sea when a storm wind is blowing fiercely. His boat sways this way and that way, and it may soon be broken. He finds himself on a plank of wood, with the wind still blowing. This is how a believer feels himself when he commits sins, but this is only if he is wished well. If he is wished otherwise, his heart will be faraway.

A person who has such experience will benefit by studying history and become acquainted with what happened to past communities. He will indeed benefit by what occurs to people in his own time. Sinful actions are harmful to man. If he hastens to remove its harm by suitable cures, he will do well. Otherwise, they become stronger, and they will overcome the power of faith within him. This spells his own ruin. An early scholar said: 'Sinful actions may lead to disbelief in the same way as fever may lead to death'.

When a person disobeys his Lord and experiences a reversal of his situation, noting a change in people's feelings towards him, with doors being closed before him, ways becoming difficult to traverse, and a diminution in his respect by his own family, he will try to find out the reason for all such change. When his efforts show him the true cause of all this and he realizes it is all because of his disobedience, it will strengthen his faith. If he desists from sin and embarks on mending his ways, he will experience respect in place of disgrace. He will discover

that delight, security and strength will replace his earlier sorrow, fear and weakness. His faith will be definitely strengthened as the evidence and proofs of faith will be clear to him in both conditions of disobedience and obedience. He will be one of those to whom the following Qur'anic verse refers: 'Allah will expunge the worst of their deeds and will give them their reward in accordance with the best that they did'. (39: 35)

When a person looking at this scene studies its details and gives it its true value, he becomes a healer of hearts, knowing what ails and cures them. Thus, Allah will give him benefit and make him able to benefit others.

7. Mercy. When a person commits a sin, his hard attitude and anger with other sinners will be removed from his heart. He used to feel as though he wants to punish every sinner, and he may pray to Allah to destroy them. He does so in his keen feeling that Allah must not be disobeyed. He does not feel any compassion towards sinners, looking at them with contempt and speaking ill of them. When he himself falls into sin as a result by being left to himself and his own devices, he will appeal to Allah, stand before Him in humility and appeal to Him as one in great trouble. He will then feel compassion towards other sinners. He will observe what Allah requires of him, but instead of appealing against other sinners, he will pray to Allah to forgive them. What great benefit this scenario brings him!

8. Weakness and powerlessness. A believer sees himself totally unable to protect himself. He realizes that he has no power or strength except by Allah's help. He sees himself like a feather dropped in an open land, with the wind blowing it right and left, or as a passenger in a boat in the middle of a storm with the waves pushing it in all directions, raising and dropping it. Allah's decree is forced upon him. He is powerless, standing at the door of his Maker, or placing his face on the ground before Him. He can cause himself neither harm nor benefit, nor can he preserve or end his life. He knows that he has nothing but ignorance and unfairness and what they entail. He may perish at any moment, like a

sheep in midst of a number of wild beasts. The sheep has no protection except that of the shepherd. Should he ignore it for a moment, the beasts will tear it apart.

Such is every person's condition: he is between Allah and his enemies, the evil ones among human beings and the jinn. If Allah protects him, they have no way to harm him, but if He lets him look after himself, even for a moment, any one of them may take hold of him.

In this scene, a person will realize that he is weak. He will no longer boast about his power and ability. He will realize that he cannot determine anything for himself. His weakness is overwhelming.

9. Humility and submission. In this respect, the person is aware in every part of himself, physical or hidden, that he has absolute and total need for Allah's help. His own welfare, guidance, success and happiness are all in Allah's hand. This mental realization cannot be expressed in words. It is merely realized when it happens. He will experience, at heart, a sort of submission that is unlike anything else. He will see himself like a broken cup thrown aside, with nothing in it. It is useless and discarded. No one cares to pick it up. The only way to mend it is for its maker to remould it. He will then turn to Allah appealing to His goodness. He realizes that he deserves neither much nor little from his Lord. Whatever comes to him from Him is too much and undeserved. It is only bestowed out of Allah's grace. He will look at what he does of acts of obedience of Allah and think that they are too little, far less than what is required of him. He looks at the few sins and acts of disobedience he commits and thinks that they are too much. The break which he has experienced made him realize all this.

The mending of such a broken heart is very close. Victory, mercy and sustenance are at hand for such a person. This scene is of great benefit to him. Indeed, a moment of this condition is more valuable in Allah's estimation than great loads of good deeds offered by those who think highly of their deeds, knowledge and general condition. The heart Allah loves best is the one that such a break has shattered and placed him in

total humility before his Lord. This person does not lift his head up to Him in his feeling of shame.

A scholar of insight was asked: Does the heart prostrate itself before Allah? He said: Yes. It does, but it is a prostration without lifting its head until the Day of Judgement. Such is the heart's prostration.

A heart that has not experienced such a break will not do this required prostration. When a heart offers this supreme prostration, all man's organs join it. His face is humbled before the Ever-Living, the Eternal-Master of all. His voice will be hushed and all senses and organs will show humility. Indeed, the person himself will be in total humility, looking up with his heart to his Lord and Protector as a humble person looks up to the One who is Mighty and Merciful. He will always be in such a condition of humility, appealing to his Lord for His grace and compassion. He is like an infatuated lover trying to please the one he loves, feeling that he cannot live without his beloved. Hence, he cares nothing for anything other than winning a positive response. Otherwise, he feels his own life as meaningless, devoid of all pleasure. He thinks: how can I displease the One who gives me life and without whom I will have neither success nor happiness?

The person in this scenario sees himself like one who was living with his father. He gives him the best food, drink and clothing. He keeps him in the best form and attire, helping him to rise higher on the way up to perfection. He looks after all his affairs. One day, his father sends him on an errand, but as he was on his way, an enemy took him by surprise, taking him captive and putting him in chains. He then took him to the enemy land, where he tortures and ill treats him. Time and again, he remembers his father's kindness and fine treatment. One day while he is in such miserable captivity, realizing that his enemy will eventually kill him, he looks up in the direction leading to his own land, and he sees his father close to him. He crawls towards him and places himself before his father, sending a compassionate appeal. He says: 'Father, look at me, your son, and what I am suffering'. His face is wet with

tears as he reaches his father and hugs him. The enemy is chasing him and stretches his hand to catch him. Can anyone imagine that his father will give him up to his enemy? Allah is more compassionate to His servant than any father or mother to their children. When His servant comes running back towards Him, throws himself at His door with tears in his eyes, and appeals to Him: 'My Lord, grant me Your mercy as none will be merciful to me. I have no guardian, support, refuge or help except You and what You will grant me. Let Your compassion be extended to me, Your wretched servant who can seek help from none but You. I have no refuge and no safety other than what You grant me'.

10. Servitude and love. This is a situation of yearning for the meeting with Allah and the delight such a meeting will bring. It is an image that is both pleasing and reassuring. This person will have thoughts of love of Allah in place of thoughts of disobedience, and the will to draw closer to Allah and please Him in place of the desire to commit what displeases Him. His tongue and other organs will concentrate on obeying Allah rather than disobeying Him. His heart is full of the love of Allah, and his tongue is constantly repeating His praises. Man's body and soul are devoted to His service. The break of his heart mentioned earlier has great effect in enhancing his love, and that effect is beyond expression.

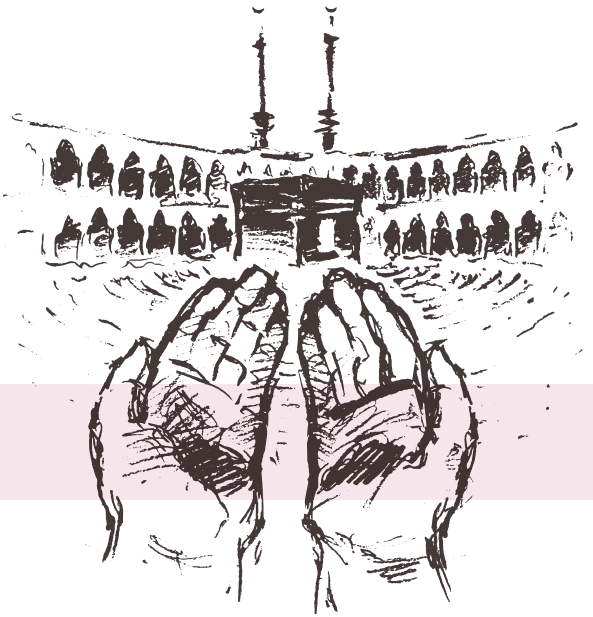
Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah used to say: 'Whoever wants eternal happiness should remain at the threshold of servitude'.

To sum up: Man's humility and the break of heart he experiences allows him a way to Allah, placing him on the way of love. A gate to it will be open to him, and this gate cannot be open from any other way. There is no doubt that all types of good action and voluntary worship will open gates of love, but the gate opened through heart break, humility, awareness of one's weakness and powerlessness, self-accusation of negligence of duty and indulgence in error is of a different type and class. The one who travels along this way feels himself a stranger among people: they are in a different plane. It is called the bird's way. The one

lying in his bed will be ahead of travellers on their way. It is from Allah that help is to be sought.

This is all a manifestation of Allah's love and His delight with the repentance offered by His servant. He loves those who repent and is exceedingly delighted with them.

When a person looks at the favours Allah bestows on him before, during and after his sin, His forbearance and kindness, he will feel the pangs of his love of Allah and yearn to meet Him. By nature, hearts love those who are kind to them. What kindness is greater than that of Allah: His servant indulges in sin and disobedience while He extends to him His favours and kindness, shields him and protects him against his enemies. He ensures that His servant remains safe of all they scheme against him.



THE STAGE OF DEVOTION, i.e. *INĀBAH*

When a person's foot is firm in the stage of repentance, he will move to the stage of devotion, which Allah commands us to attend and He praises His friend, Abraham, for attaining it. He says: 'Turn [in devotion] to your Lord'. (39: 54) 'Abraham was indeed most clement, tender-hearted, and devout.' (11: 75) Allah tells us that His reward and Paradise are stored for people who fear Him and are devoted to Him. He says: 'And paradise will be brought close to the righteous and will no longer be distant: "This is what you have been promised; this is for everyone who used to turn to Allah and to keep Him in mind, who used to stand in awe of the Lord of Grace although He is beyond the reach of human perception, and who comes before Him with a heart full of devotion. Enter paradise in peace"'. (50: 31-34)

There are two types of devotion. The first is to His Lordship. It is offered by all creation, believers and unbelievers; righteous and habitual sinners. Allah says: 'When harm touches people they call out to their Lord for help, turning to Him in devotion'. (30: 33) The other type is the one offered by Allah's best servants. It is devotion to His Godhead. Hence it is a devotion of love and servitude. This second type includes four things: loving Allah, submission to Him, going towards Him and turning away from all else. Only a person who combines all four deserves to be called *munīb*, i.e. devout. Early scholars interpreted this word along these lines. The term *ināb*ah connotes moving at speed, turning back to the right place and going forward. Therefore, the one who is a *munīb* means a person who is going forward at speed to please Allah, returning to Him at all times, and moving forward towards all that Allah loves.

SIGNS OF SINCERE DEVOTION

When a person is in clear devotion to his Lord, he gets rid of the idea of the pleasure of sin, replacing it with pain to be felt whenever an act of sin is remembered. As long as the pleasure of thinking about sin remains in a person's heart, his devotion is not pure.

It may be asked: which situation is better: that of the one who thinks of the pleasure of sin and resists it, abandoning such sin out of fearing Allah, and loving Him or the one whose heart has killed the pleasure of sin? In its place there is now pain as well as feelings of security with his Lord, enjoying His love and the pleasure of remembering and glorifying Him. The answer is that the second is far better. The ultimate a person of the first situation will achieve is to endeavour to attain the status of the second person. Until then, he remains below him in status.

If it is said: how about the reward for resisting the pleasure of sin, seeking Allah's pleasure, preferring it to one's own desire and pleasure? After all, this is why mankind are considered by Sunni scholars better than angels, and they are the best of creation. By contrast, the one who has certainty is relieved of such striving. Hence, there is between them the same gap as exists between one who is healthy and another who is not. In answer, we say that a human soul has three conditions: 1) persuasion and urging the commitment of a sin; 2) blaming oneself and regretting its commitment; and 3) trusting Allah and turning to Him in full. This last condition is the best and most important one. Everyone strives to attain this state. Whatever reward he gets for his striving and perseverance is gained because he is working hard to arrive at the stage of complete trust in Allah. Thus, he is like one who travels through difficulties and hardships in order to reach home and be happy with arriving there and settling in it. The other is busy with what he has attained: he continues with all aspects of his worship, paying no attention to any distraction. The difference between the two is that the latter is busy with the goal while the former is busy with the means. Each will have his reward, but there is a wide gulf between the reward for the ultimate goal and that for means.

The conditions, servitude and strength of faith experienced by the one who has attained certainty are greater than that of the one striving against self-prompting, even though the latter may do more of good deeds. The one with certainty has a higher quality and better shape of deeds. This is Allah's bounty which He bestows on whomever He wills. Abu Bakr did not excel other companions of the Prophet through greater devotion and acts of worship. Some of them did more in the way of voluntary prayers, fasting, hajj and Qur'an recitation. Yet Abu Bakr excelled them through something else that he experienced at heart. Hence, even the best of the Prophet's companions tried to match him, but ended in failure.

Having said that, the one who strives against the temptation of the pleasure of sin and the gratification of carnal desire may find servitude to Allah harder, but this does not necessarily mean that it is better in grade. The best of all that human beings do is to believe in Allah. This is superior to jihad, yet jihad is harder.

One of the signs of this stage of devotion is to desist from looking down on people who neglect their duties, and fearing for them, while hoping that one's end will be better. Thus, one entertains the hope of receiving Allah's mercy while fearing that Allah's punishment will befall others. The proper attitude is to hope that they will receive Allah's mercy and to fear Allah's punishment for one's own errors. If a person dislikes them because he is well aware of their true condition, he should dislike himself more and should hope for Allah's mercy being granted to them more than he hopes it for himself. One early scholar said: 'You shall not attain profound knowledge until you hate other people for nothing other than Allah's cause, then you look at yourself and hate it more'.

Another sign is to look at the measure of self interest in one's good deeds, and to distinguish what is truly dedicated to Allah from the measure of self interest. Most, or even all of one's good deeds may be undertaken for oneself only, without a person being aware of the fact.

Countless defects, interests and purposes are entertained by people, and yet they ensure that good deeds are not done purely for Allah's sake and

prevent their being raised to Him. A person may do a good deed, totally unseen by any human being, yet it may not be sincerely done for Allah's sake, while a different deed is done and witnessed by many people, yet it is done purely to please Allah and for no other purpose. No one can distinguish one from the other except people of insight and those who are fully aware of hearts and the defects or ills that affect them.

There is a distance separating a person's deed and his heart. Along this distance there are barriers preventing the deed from getting to the heart. Nothing reaches the heart of it, such as love, fear, hope, carelessness about this life and eagerness for the outcome in the Hereafter, light distinguishing Allah's true servants from His enemies and truth from falsehood, or strength of purpose. Had the effect of one's good deeds reached one's heart, such a heart would have been enlightened so as to distinguish truth from falsehood, and Allah's servants from His enemies. Such enlightenment would have taken it to better situations.

Moreover, there is a distance between a person's heart and his Lord. Along this distance there are barriers preventing good deeds from being raised to Him. These barriers include conceit, self admiration, showing off, forgetting Allah's favour, etc. Were a person to try hard to identify these barriers, he would be amazed. By His grace, Allah keeps these shielded from most people. Were they to behold them, they would fall into what is worse, such as despair, lamentation, loss of strength and desire to continue to do good works.

THE STAGE OF TAKING HEED

A person's heart then moves onto the stage of taking heed, which is coupled with that of devotion. Allah says: 'Only those who turn to Allah take heed'. (40: 13) This is a distinctive mark of those who are of sound mind. Allah says: 'Is, then, he who knows that what has been revealed to you by your Lord is the Truth like one who is blind? Only those who are endowed with understanding take heed'. (13: 19)

Taking heed and reflection are situations that yield a variety of aspects of knowledge and facts of faith. A person of knowledge will continue to reflect and endeavour to take heed until his heart's lock is rendered open by the will of Allah. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said that scholars continued to do this and tried to get hearts to speak until they did.

The relationship between taking heed and reflection is that of the desired thing being achieved after it has been sought after. Hence, Allah's recited verses and observed signs serve as reminders. Allah says about His revealed verses: 'Indeed, We bestowed Our guidance on Moses, and passed down the Book to the Children of Israel as a guide and a reminder to people of understanding'. (40: 53-54) And He says about his observed signs: 'How many a generation, far greater in power, have We destroyed before these [unbelievers]? They wandered through the lands seeking a place of refuge. In this there is a reminder for everyone who has an alert heart, or one who attentively listens and sees'. (50: 36-37)

People may be grouped into three classes. The first is that of a person whose heart is dead. He has no heart, and therefore, this last verse does not apply to him. The second is that of a person whose heart is alive and ready, but he does not listen to the recited verses which tell of Allah's

observed signs, either because these do not reach him, or because his heart is preoccupied with something else. Such a person does not get the reminder despite having a ready heart. The third is that of a person whose heart is alive and ready. When Allah's verses are recited, he listens and ensures that his heart is attentive, not distracted by anything else. It is the people of this third class that benefit by Allah's revealed texts and observed signs.

The people of the first class are like a blind man who cannot see. Those of the second class are like a person with open eyes but he is looking away from what is to be seen. As such, he cannot see. Those of the third class are like a person with open eyes looking intently at what is there to see. He stands at a middle distance from it, neither far nor close. He is the one who sees the truth. Limitless is Allah in His glory. He made His words a cure for hearts' ailments.

THE MEANS TO REAP THE FRUIT OF REFLECTION

Al Harawī said: 'The fruits of reflection are gathered by three things: 1) Recognition of life's short duration. 2) Pondering on the Qur'an. 3) Avoiding mixing with people, great hopes, seeking help from anyone other than Allah, overeating and sleeping.

The first of these is the fact that this life is short. It is important that a Muslim remains always aware that life may end at any time. This is one of the most beneficial thoughts for one's heart, because it makes the person eager to use every opportunity to increase his good deeds so as to add to his record with Allah. It also motivates him to prepare for his journey to the everlasting life to come, make amends for whatever he fell short of. It helps him to care little for the pleasures of this life and to concentrate on what he may earn in the life to come. The more he reflects on the fact that this life is short, the greater is his certainty that it is on the way out, and that what remains of this life is no more than a small amount of water left in a jug, or what remains of a day when the sun is merely seen on mountain tops. He will also see that the life to

come is the permanent one. It is a waufarer approaching his destination, and its signs are all around him. In this respect, we are like people going out to meet our relatives as they return home from a journey. Both are moving towards each other, and their meeting is bound to happen soon.

When we speak about the shortness of the duration of this present life, it is sufficient to remember what Allah says: 'But consider this: If We allow them to enjoy themselves for several years, and then the promised [punishment] befalls them – of what avail to them will be all their past enjoyment?' (26: 205-207) 'On the Day when He will gather them together, [it will seem to them] as though they had not sojourned in this world more than an hour of a day, getting to know one another.' (10: 45) One day when the sun was merely visible on the mountain tops, the Prophet addressed his companions and said: 'What is left of this life, compared with what has passed, is the same as what is left of this day of yours compared with what has gone of it'.[24]

Awareness of the short duration of this life depends on two things: the certainty that life on earth will come to an end, and that all living souls will die, and the certainty that there will be another life which will be permanent and everlasting. The two lives should be compared and the preferable one should be given priority.

The second element is to ponder on the Qur'an. This means looking with one's heart's eye at its meanings, so as to assimilate its message. It does not refer to its mere recitation without understanding its meanings. Allah says: 'This is a blessed Book which We have revealed to you so that people may ponder over its message, and that those endowed with insight may take it to heart'. (38: 29)

Nothing is more beneficial to anyone in both the present life and the life to come than pondering on the Qur'an and thinking deeply about its meanings. This process gives a person an insight into the different aspects of what is good and what is evil, and their different ways,

24 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2,191.

means, results and fruits. It also strengthens the foundation of faith in a person's heart, consolidates its pillars and puts him in view of this world and the Hereafter. It gives him a vision of Heaven and Hell, and places before him images of past communities and what happened to them, pointing out the lesson to learn from their history. It informs him of Allah's justice and His bounty. Moreover, pondering on the meanings of the Qur'an will give a person the correct knowledge of Allah, His names, attributes and deeds, as well as what He loves and dislikes. It shows him the straight path leading to Him and what those who travel along this path expect when they arrive to meet Him. It gives him an awareness of the impediments that may obstruct his travel along the straight path. The Qur'an further informs us of the human soul and its characteristics, what keeps deeds good and what corrupts them, the two different ways of the people going to Heaven and those going to Hell, as well as their respective conditions, aspects and deeds, and the different grades of both. The Qur'an also tells us of the different groups of people and what they have in common and how they differ. In short, it provides us with the correct information about Allah, the way to Him and what we should expect when we go to Him.

By contrast, pondering on the Qur'an gives us clear information about three other things: 1) what Satan stands for; 2) the way leading to him, and 3) what those who follow him should expect of humiliation and punishment when they reach him.

There are six matters that are necessary for everyone to know, realize and visualize. They will show a person the life to come as though he is attending it, and take him away from this life as though he is not in it. They will enable him to see the truth and falsehood in everything about which people differ, enabling him to see the truth for what it is and falsehood plain as it is. They will give him a criterion and light to distinguish guidance from error. Thus his heart will have added strength, liveliness, pleasure and delight, putting him in one way and other people in a totally different way.

The meanings of the Qur'an will thus continue to motivate a person to turn to his Lord, reminding him of Allah's fine promise, as well as His stern warnings against severe punishment. They will urge him to reduce his burden in order to get ready for the meeting on the hard day that is bound to come, and guide him out of the darkness of confused views and doctrines to put him on the straight path. They will stop him from plunging into deviant and erroneous ways, and motivate him to appeal for an increase of Allah's favours by giving proper thanks. The Qur'an will also give him an insight into the limits of what is lawful and unlawful, so that he will not exceed them.

Pondering on the Qur'an and understanding its meanings will give us a firm adherence to the right faith which will serve as an immunity against swerving from the truth. It will facilitate for us overcoming hard difficulties. When we slacken and move slowly, it will encourage us to renew our efforts and catch up with believers who are ahead of us. They will be our guide, making sure that we stay on the right path when any temptation beckons, trying to lure us away. They will give us the right warning and show us the way to seek Allah's help and protection.

The above quotation from al-Harawī mentions in the third item five things to avoid. These are bound to corrupt one's heart, hence the warning against them. They are: much mixing with people, great hopes, seeking help from anyone other than Allah, overeating and sleeping.

It should be clearly understood that a believer's heart moves towards Allah and the life to come, recognizes the way of the truth, the ills that affect one's soul and action. A believer's heart discerns the impediments that obstruct its way, recognizing these through its own light, strength, health, resolution, sound hearing and sight as well as the absence of distractions. The above-mentioned five things stifle its light, mar its insight, impair its hearing, make a person dumb and considerably weaken him and his resolve. They set him on a backward trend and leave him powerless. Whoever does not feel this is one with a dead heart.

These five things prevent a person from attaining perfection, stop him from reaching the objective for which he is created, and which ensures his happiness, delight and pleasure. Indeed, man cannot taste real happiness, pleasure and delight except through knowing and loving Allah, delight at His being near and yearning to meet Him. This is his immediate heaven, while his happiness in the life to come is granted only in its Heaven. Thus, everyone has two heavens, and no one will be admitted into the second unless he has experienced the first. I heard Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah say: 'There is a garden, i.e. a heaven, in this present life. Whoever does not enter it shall not be admitted into the heaven of the Hereafter'. A discerning scholar said: 'There are times my heart goes through and I would say: if the people in Heaven are in a similar situation, then they are enjoying a good life'.

Another said: 'Poor indeed are the people who care only for this present life. They depart life without tasting the best of it'. He was asked: 'What is the best of it?' He answered: 'Love of Allah, feeling close to Him, yearning to meet Him, and turning away from all else'. Everyone with a sound heart will confirm this through personal experience.

Those five things prevent a person's heart from achieving this, impede its march and cause him sickness that must be treated. Otherwise, it may spell a person's ruin.

Much mixing with people, which is the first of the five, leads to one's heart becoming full of the effect of others, giving him worries, distractions, weakness and having a heavy burden of association with the wrong people and losing some benefits he is in need of, wasting his time instead of attending to his own interests. Facing all this, what will remain for him of things that lead to success in the life to come? Much mixing with people often brings about ill fortune and all sorts of problems, depriving a person of good fortune and Allah's favours. Indeed, much of the ill that befalls people is due to the sort of people they mix with. Take the case of Abu Ṭālib, the Prophet's uncle. His bad companions exerted so much pressure on him, preventing him from

saying the declaration that would have ensured for him everlasting happiness in the life to come. That is the declaration of belief in Allah's oneness.

This mixing with people takes the form of friendship in this life, with people helping each other with their needs. However, when the outcome is faced, it will become enmity and a cause of great sorrow, as Allah says: 'On that Day the wrongdoer will bite his two hands and say: "Would that I had followed the path shown to me by the Messenger. Oh, woe is me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so for a friend! He surely led me astray from the Reminder after it had come to me!" Satan is ever treacherous to man'. (25: 27-29) He also says: 'On that Day, friends will become enemies to one another, except for the Allah-fearing'. (43: 67)

The proper standard that ensures benefit of mixing with people is that one associates with them in what is good, such as attending congregational and Friday prayers, the Eid, learning, giving and receiving good advice, etc. One should stay away from bad and evil things, as well as permissible but unnecessary things. If a person finds himself in a situation where he has to attend people who are doing what is evil, and cannot stay away from them, he must not under any pretext agree with them. When he takes such an attitude, it is very likely that they may try to harm him, if he has no support. In this case, he should endure their harm patiently, because it will, in time, be replaced by honour and love, as also by praise by them, other believers and Allah Himself. To agree with them and do as they do will be followed by humiliation and hatred, as well as dispraise by them, other believers and Allah Himself.

Enduring their harm will ensure a better outcome in the end. If it is necessary to mix with such people in permissible but unnecessary things, a believer should try his best to change the nature of such gathering into one which includes something that earns Allah's approval and reward. He should make up his mind and take courage to carry out his resolve. He should pay no attention to the whisperings of Satan, painting his

action as hypocritical, or merely to show off and invite praise for one's knowledge, etc. He should silence such discouragement, pray for Allah's help and try to influence his companions to do what is good and beneficial.

If a believer finds himself in such a situation and cannot influence those people, he should try to skilfully remove his heart from among them, so as to be physically present, but his heart is faraway. Thus, he is at the same time near and distant, alert and asleep, looking at them but not seeing them, hearing this discourse but not understanding it. He has taken his heart away and raised it and himself far above, glorifying Allah with the angels who are around Allah's throne extolling their Lord's limitless glory.

This is a very hard task for anyone, but it will be easy when Allah has facilitated it for any of His servants. What ensures this help is that a person should be true in his intention and determination, constantly seeking Allah's help, imploring Him with humility. What helps to achieve this is one's true love of Allah, and one's constant remembrance of Allah, verbally and mentally. It is also important to avoid the other four factors that corrupt a person's heart, which we shall presently explain. This needs good preparation, added strength granted by Allah, true resolve and clear reliance on Allah.

The second corruptor of a person's heart is entertaining great hopes. This is like a sea without a shore. Upon the surface of this sea only the bankrupt in this world sail. It is said that great hopes are the capital of the bankrupt, and their commodities are the devils' promises and false images. Great hopes and false prospects will continue to lure the sailors on this sea, who will remain humble, having no true view of the facts around them. They paint for themselves images of what they hope to achieve, and consider that they should have great prospects. They follow that with imagining that they have attained their hopes and are enjoying them. Suddenly, they wake up and realize that they have nothing.

By contrast, a person with determined efforts focuses his hopes on knowledge and faith, as well as the deeds that draw him closer to his Lord. Such a person's hopes are drawn from faith and made of light, while the hopes of the other one are mere self deception and arrogance.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) praises a person whose hopes are good, and in some cases he stated that his reward is the same as that of the one who does what is good. He mentions the case of the one who looks at one who uses his wealth properly, always fearing Allah, paying his zakat and maintaining ties with his relatives. Poor as this onlooker is, he expresses his feeling saying: 'If Allah grants me wealth, I will use it in the same way as this wealthy person'. The Prophet comments: 'The two will receive the same reward'.

The third and worst corruptor of a person's heart is seeking and looking for help from anyone other than Allah. Nothing is more prejudicial to a person's interests and happiness, and nothing takes him further away from Allah than pinning one's hopes on someone else. When a person does this, Allah will leave him to the one on whom he has pinned his hopes, and He will let him down on that score. As such, he misses out on what he might have had from Allah. Thus, seeking help from different sources leads to the loss of one's hopes from Allah and missing out on any benefit he has had from others. Allah says: 'They have taken to worshipping deities other than Allah, hoping that they will give them power and glory. By no means! They will renounce their worship and turn against them'. (19: 81-82) The worst let down is that suffered by the one who sought help from others than Allah. What he gets from them is prone to be lost or finished and it is much less than what he has missed out on of his happiness, success and interests. His case is like that of a person who tries to have a cover protecting him from hot or cold weather, using a spider's web. Needless to say, a spider's web is the most clumsy refuge, as Allah describes.

Food is the fourth corruptor of man's heart. There are two types of food that corrupt hearts. The first is the food that essentially has a corrupting

effect, such as forbidden food. These are forbidden either because they undermine Allah's right or undermine people's rights. The other type is food that becomes a corruptor because of its quantity. It is overeating what is permissible, because it makes a person heavy, too lazy to engage in acts of worship that will bring him good reward. Moreover, it leads to obesity, whereby a person continues to overeat until he becomes considerably over-weight, and then he will be occupied with trying to prevent its harmful effects. Furthermore, when a person overeats, Satan will strengthen his love of food and open the ways for temptation. While fasting makes Satan's way to a person narrow and difficult to traverse, overeating opens this way up. In fact, when a person eats much, he will drink much, sleep long and lose much. A well known hadith quotes the Prophet: 'No human being may fill up a vessel worse than his tummy. It is enough for anyone to have a few bites to satisfy hunger. If he must, then one-third for his food, one-third for his drink and one-third for breathing'.[25]

Much sleeping is the fifth of these corruptors of man's heart. Allowing oneself many long hours of sleep will deaden one's heart, afflict one's body, waste time and make a person lazy and oblivious to important things. Some of it is greatly discouraged, and some is harmful, giving the body no benefit. The most beneficial sleep is when there is clear need for it. To sleep in the early hours of the night is better than choosing its late hours, while sleeping in the middle of the day is more useful than sleeping towards either end of it. The closer sleep is to either end of the day it will be of less benefit and greater harm, particularly sleep after ʿAṣr, or in the early hours of daylight, unless one has stayed up long during the preceding night.

What scholars consider as discouraged is to sleep during the period between the time when Fajr Prayer becomes due and sunrise. This is a period of time that brings much benefit. Those who undertake the journey towards Allah's acceptance consider that travelling during

25 Related by al-Nasā'ī, 6,737; al-Tirmidhī, 2,380; Ibn Mājah, 3,349.

this period, i.e. spending time in voluntary worship such as Allah's glorification and remembrance, reciting the Qur'an, learning, etc. is particularly beneficial. Even when they spend the whole night in voluntary worship, they do not allow themselves to slacken during this period, until sunrise. It is the beginning of the day and its key. It is the time when provisions are granted, blessing is bestowed, and the starting point of the day. Therefore, what is achieved during this period applies to the rest of the day. Hence, only a person who is in urgent need of sleep may use this period for sleep.

Generally speaking, the best and most beneficial sleep is to use the first half of the night and the last one-sixth of it for sleep. This makes approximately eight hours. Medical doctors suggest that this is the most appropriate length of time for sleep. When sleep is longer or shorter, it leads to some negative effect on a person's nature.

Another period of time when sleep is not of benefit is the very early part of the night, shortly after sunset. It is better to wait until darkness has thickened. The Prophet used to dislike sleeping during this period. As such, it is naturally and religiously discouraged.

While too long sleep leads to these adverse effects, too little sleep causes different serious harmful effects. These include bad moods, psychological disorders, dryness which impedes mental and physical activity, other illnesses which makes it difficult for a person to benefit from his heart or body. The whole of our existence is based on proper balance. Whoever observes it will receive his share of goodness.

Chapter 4

Guidelines for Islamic Workers: (Maulana Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi RA)

this chapter consists of the following points:

Practical guidance for Islamic workers, focusing on inner purification, devotion, and effective service to Allah.

1. Ta'alluq Billah (Attachment to Allah)

- The worker's primary attachment must be **to Allah alone**.
- Actions should be motivated by seeking Allah's pleasure, not worldly gain or recognition.
- Attachment to Allah strengthens **steadfastness**, especially during trials and opposition.

Key Points

1. Loyalty is first to Allah, then to the cause.
2. Avoid worldly attachments that distract from the mission.
3. Prayer, dhikr, and reliance on Allah cultivate steadfastness.

2. Self-Purification (Tazkiyah al-Nafs)

- Workers must cleanse their hearts from **sins, hypocrisy, pride, and selfish desires**.
- Both internal purification and external conduct must complement each other.

Key Points

1. Avoid hypocrisy, arrogance, and deceit.
2. Practice regular **self-accounting (muhasaba)**.
3. Spiritual practices strengthen moral resolve.
4. Purity of intention ensures Allah accepts deeds.

3. Discipline and Training (Tadrīb)

- Islamic work requires **structured training and discipline**.
- Workers must develop **patience, perseverance, and self-control**.
- Work should be carried out methodically, not impulsively.

Key Points

1. Maintain routines for spiritual and practical duties.
2. Discipline ensures resilience in adversity.
3. Proper time and energy management is essential.
4. Training includes personal development and acquiring necessary skills.

4. Sincerity (Ikhlas)

- Actions must be **purely for Allah**, free from desire for praise or recognition.
- Sincerity ensures **acceptance of deeds** and protection from discouragement.

Key Points

1. Continuously evaluate motives.
2. Avoid showing off or seeking approval.
3. True sincerity brings inner peace and divine support.
4. Strengthens perseverance under trials.

5. Devotion and Sacrifice (Ithar wa Fida)

- Islamic workers must be ready to **sacrifice comfort, wealth, and personal interests** for Allah's cause.
- Devotion involves total commitment, prioritizing the mission over self-interest.

Key Points

1. Personal sacrifices are necessary for communal or global Islamic work.
2. True devotion is measured by willingness to endure hardships.

3. Sacrifice strengthens trust and reliance on Allah.
4. Inspires others and fosters unity.

6. Attend to Your Kith and Kin

- While focusing on Islamic work, one must **not neglect family responsibilities**.
- Family is a trust from Allah; fulfilling their rights is a religious obligation.
- Proper care of kith and kin ensures **moral integrity and social stability**, and prevents hypocrisy (claiming devotion to Allah but neglecting loved ones).

Key Points

1. Family duties should be fulfilled before or alongside other work.
2. Neglecting family can harm both personal and spiritual credibility.
3. A balanced life strengthens the worker's overall mission

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّيْ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ

Dear Friends !

We are about to disperse after four days of Conference.* We have completed the work that we wanted to do in this conference. In our special session we have also reviewed our work, to a certain extent. Now, before we leave, I want to have a talk with you—members and associates all — and give the necessary instructions needed to carry on the Dawah work properly, in the future.

Attachment with Allah

The first and foremost instruction, always given by all the prophets, the rightly-guided caliphs and the pious among the Ummah to their companions had been to inculcate fear of Allah, implant His love in one's heart and to promote attachment with Him. Hence following in their footsteps, I also have chosen it as the first advice to my friends and shall in future

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*A speech delivered on November 13, 1951 in the final session of annual General Conference of Jamate Islami Pakistan held at Karachi in Pakistan.

too continue to do so as I get a chance, for it deserves a preferential treatment.

Belief in Allah has priority over all other articles of faith. Hence association of heart with Allah should have priority in prayers. Fear of Allah should have priority in morals and soliciting the pleasure of Allah should have priority in all personal dealings. In short, the correct adjustment of our entire life is to be based on the principle that the yearning to win the pleasure of Allah should have priority over all other motives, efforts and endeavours. Particularly this hard task of ours, for which we stand as a party, can only thrive on the motivating force of our attachment with Allah. It will gather strength according to our strong attachment to Allah and will weaken according to our weak attachment with Him.

It is an admitted fact that for whatever task a man stands, be it worldly or heavenly, the main force behind is the purpose for which one has risen, and zeal can only engender when he has deep interest and enthusiasm for that aim. A self-seeker cannot succeed without being selfish. Intensity in love for self leads him to the service of his self with the eagerness of the same strength. A man working for his children

being mad in his love for his children, sacrifices his pleasures and comforts for the welfare of his children, and sometimes stakes not only his worldly gains but even the benefits of the hereafter, so that his children may prosper to the utmost. A man working for his nation or country is a captive of their love and because of this love he endures monetary losses, as well as hardships of detentions and jails. He works hard day and night and sometimes even sacrifices his life for the freedom, defence and supremacy of his nation or state.

Now, if we are struggling to uphold the Word of God, not for our own selfish ends; neither for any motive of family interests nor any national or state interest but our only sincere desire is to please our lord, Allah Almighty alone, and we have engaged ourselves in this work only because we are convinced that this is His work, you can really see that this work cannot be advanced unless and until our attachment with Allah is real, strong and deep. Zeal for this work develops only when all our inclinations are concentrated in the endeavours for propagating the Word of Allah. For all those who have joined hands in this work, it is not enough that they might be connected with

"Allah also", but that their connection should be with "Allah only". In other words, it should not be 'a' connection but the only real and true connection. We should always be vigilant and conscious that our attachment with Allah does not decrease but always increases and gets deeper day by day.

Attachment with Allah is the main guiding spirit of our mission. Thanks to Allah, no member of our party is unmindful of this fact or its significance. Yet many a men are often confused as to what does the term attachment with Allah (*Taalluq Billah*) exactly mean, what is the method of inculcating and promoting it, and how to find out whether one really has any connection with Allah or not and if he has, then to what degree. I have often felt that lack of knowledge and understanding in this respect leaves people in wilderness, knowing not where do they stand and where are they to go and how much distance have they yet to cover. Consequently some of us get lost in vague ideals and some get inclined towards ways and methods that never lead them to their destination Someone finds difficulty in differentiating

between closely related and far-related things—and someone is just astounded.

I shall not, therefore, only confine myself to advice about *Taalluq Billah* but also, try to present clear cut answers to the said questions, to the best of my knowledge.

The Meaning of *Taalluq Billah*

Its meaning according to the Holy Quran are that a person should live and die for Allah, and his worship and sacrifices should also be meant for Him alone.

اِنَّ صَلٰوتِیْ وَ نُسُکِیْ وَ مَحْیَایَ وَ مَمَاتِیْ لِلّٰہِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ

"(Say O ! Mohammad (SAW) surely my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah the Cherisher of the worlds." (6 : 163)

He should worship Allah with full devotion and subject his life exclusively to unqualified submission to Allah. Quran says :

وَمَآ اُمِرُوْٓا اِلَّا لِیَعْبُدُوا اللّٰہَ مُخْلِصِیْنَ لَہُ الدِّیْنَ

"They had been ordered nothing but that they should worship Allah with sincere devotion and being true in faith to Him." (98 : 5)

The Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) has, on different occasions, explained this relationship in such clear terms that there is no ambiguity left in its meaning and purpose. It is explicitly clear from his statements that the nature of this relationship is nothing but—

خَشْيَةَ اللهِ فِى السِّرِّ وَالْعَلَانِيَةِ

to fear Allah in all matters—open or secret—

أَنْ تَكُونَ بِمَا فِى يَدَىِ اللهِ أَوْثَقَ بِمَا فِى يَدَيْكَ

and to rely on the might of Allah rather than one's own resources.

He should be ready to face the anger of men to solicit the pleasure of Allah, and never prepared for the *vice versa*. And when this attachment with Allah rises to a pitch that all love, enmity, giving and withholding by a person is for the sake of Allah alone, and with no other motive behind, it means that he has attained perfection in his attachment with Allah.

مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِلّٰهِ وَأَبْغَضَ لِلّٰهِ

وَأَعْطَى لِلّٰهِ وَمَنَعَ لِلّٰهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَكْمَلَ الْإِيمَانَ

(The Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him)

said "whoever loved for Allah, and hated for Allah, gave for Allah and withheld for Allah, is the person who has perfected his faith (*I'man*)".

Now look into the meanings of the (*Qunūt*) prayer which you recite every night. Every word of it points towards the connection you should have with Allah. Just ponder over its words and see for yourself the promise you make with Allah about the kinds of connections you should have with Him.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا نَسْتَعِيْنُكَ — بِالْكُفَّارِ مُلْحِق

"O ! Allah, we seek Your help and crave for pardon from You. We believe wholly in You and solely depend upon You, (so) we praise You in the best words, we are thankful to You, and not ungrateful toYou. (Hence) we abandon and reject (leave) all those who transgress Your Commands. O ! Lord we worship You alone, offer prayers for Your sake, bow down to You and all our endeavours and efforts are meant to lead us towards you. We are hopeful of mercy from you and are afraid of Your punishment. UndoubtedlyYour punishment is to fall on the rejecters."

This attachment with Allah (*Taalluq Billah*) is

also vividly mirrored in the special prayer of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) which he used to recite at the time of *Tahajjud*.[1] He used to say :

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ اَسْلَمْتُ — وَاِلَيْكَ حَاكَمْتُ

"O ! Allah, I have bowed down to you, declared my faith in You, placed my reliance in You always took recourse to You, fought for You and placed my case before You."

How to Increase *Taalluq Billah* ?

The above mentioned is the correct interpretation of the attachment that a firm believer should have with Allah. Now let us consider the method of acquiring and increasing it. The only method of acquiring it is to believe in Allah and accept Him the One with no partner, as the Lord, the Deity and the Master of his own self as well as of the whole Universe, and to accept all the attributes, the rights and the privileges of godship as reserved for Allah alone, cleaning one's heart from all possible effects of polytheism (*Shirk*). When this is

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1. *Tahajjud* is a supererogative prayer offered late after midnight getting up from deep slumber, all alone in one's room, to be followed by sleep again.

perfectly done, connection with Allah is duly established.

Now the strengthening of this relationship is possible in two ways. One is of thinking and assimilation and the other is of translating it into action. First you are required to fully grasp and understand your relationship with Allah by nature as well as logically incumbent upon you in practical life with the help of the Holy Quran and the acknowledged traditions of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him). The correct perception, discernment and appreciation of this relationship is only possible through deep and concentrative study of Quran and Hadith and repetition of this study time and again to retain it in your mind. Consequently whatever aspects of your relationship with Allah dawn upon you, ponder over them and look into yourself as to how much are you meeting the demands of that relationship and where and to what extent are you failing. Your attachment with Allah will increase in proportion to your self assessment and understanding of your required role.

For example, your first and foremost relation with Allah is that of a worshipper with the worshipped. Your other relationship with

Allah is that you are His Vicegerent, custodian of and responsible for innumerable trusts (*Amanāt*). Your third relationship with Allah is that you have executed a sale deed by declaring your faith and conviction in Him. Through this contract you have bartered your life and property to Him and He has purchased it in consideration of paradise for you in return. Your fourth relationship with Allah is that you stand responsible to Him. You are not accountable to Him only for your acts and deeds that are open and visible but also for your intentions and aspirations and for all your moves and plans. In short, there are so many relations that exist between you and Allah and your nearness to Him very much depends on your appreciation and understanding of these relations and to the extent to which their demands are met. Your relation with Allah will grow weaker and weaker if you do not care for the demands of this relationship and will get deeper and stronger if you are duly conscious of and attentive to its demads.

It is never a method of abstract thinking and theory It proves fruitful and maintainable only when it is translated into practice. It calls for unqualified obedience and all out efforts to win Allah's pleasure i.e. to do all that pleases

Allah. True obedience to Allah's commands means total compliance—open as well as secret—not unwillingly but with full eagerness and zeal, without any worldly aim and solely to please Allah. At the same time, abstain openly, as well as in secret, from all activities forbidden by Allah, with full abhorrence and deep contempt and fearless of any worldly loss, save the fear of the wrath of Allah only. This conduct in life will raise you high up to the position of *taqwa*, (abstention from the displeasure of Allah). Further when you engage yourself in spreading all that pleases Allah and suppressing and eliminating all that displeases Allah, you do not hesitate in sacrificing your life, money, time, efforts and intellect or for that purpose any thing possible, still you do not boast of any of your such sacrifices, nor do you consider it any favour to anyone. Instead you regard your biggest sacrifice short of the due right of your Creator. Then this is the attitude that elevates you to the position of *Ehsan*—beauteous submission to the will of Allah.

Means of Growing *Taalluq Billah*

In reality it is not so easy to develop such attitude. It is an uphill task which requires a lot of energy. This energy can only be generated

with the help of the following four things.

(1) *Salat* (Prayers) : You should offer not only the obligatory prayers (*Fard*), but also the *Sunnahs* i.e. additional prayers offered punctually by the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the *Nafl* i.e. supererogatory prayers as many as easily possible. But make it a point that you offer the *Nafl* — supererogatory prayers indoors and in secrecy, so that your personal attachment with Allah might increase, and sincerity of purpose develop in you. Show of *nafl* or *tahajjud* prayers gives way to hypocricy and self-importance which is detrimental to sincere belief. Same is the case with other good deeds like almsgiving and remembrance of Allah which are destroyed by show and publicity.

(2) *Zikr-e-Ilahi* (Remembrance of Allah) : Remembrance of Allah is a continuous process throughout the life in all circumstances. The best and most appropriate way to remember Allah is the one practised by the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) himself, which he taught to his companions, and not the techniques invented or borrowed

from others by the *sufies* in the later period. Try to learn by heart, as many prayers as possible, taught by the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him), fully grasping their meanings and recite them off and on keeping the meanings present in your mind. It is very effective in maintaining your attention and devotion to Allah.

(3) *Saum or Fasting :* Apart from the obligatory fasting of the month of Ramadan, observe some *nafl* (supererogatory) fasts also. The easiest and most practical way is to fast for three days every month with a determination to attain the same degree of *taqwa* during these three days which is the real purpose behind fasting according to the Holy Quran.

(4) *Infaq-fi-Sabeelillah* (Spending in the way of Allah) : This spending, obligatory as well as supererogatory (*nafl*) to the extent of one's means, should be continuously done. But one thing should always be kept in mind. The real worth is not of the quantity of what you spend but of the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of Allah. A penny from a poor man by

cutting his food expenses is much more precious before Allah than the thousands spent by a millionaire that amount to only one-tenth or one-twentieth of his expenses on luxuries. You should also realise the importance attached to *Sadqah* (spending in the way of Allah) by Allah and His Prophet Mohammad (may peace be upon him) as the best means of purifying one-self. You can yourself experience the effects of *Sadqah*. Suppose you commit a wrong unintentionally. When you realise it you repent and beg His pardon. Then again the same thing happens. This time you add some *Sadqah* to your repentance (*Taubah*) and prayer. You shall yourself feel the difference it makes. You shall note that the repentance followed by *Sadqah* makes you purer and stronger to resist the vily inclinations.

This is the pure and simple method of getting closer to Allah taught to us by the Quran and Sunnah. If you follow this method, you can increase your attachment with Allah, without taking to the *sufic* techniques and methods and leading a normal life at home with your family,

carrying on all your worldly activities as usual.

Measure of Attachment with Allah

Now comes the question of assessing the extent and degree of relationship with Allah and that how can we know of increase or decrease in this attachment. Let me say you need not wait for any revelation in dreams, any divine inspiration, any supernatural power or divine light in dark solitary cells. The measure has already been provided by Allah in every man's heart. You can judge it awake and in full day light. Recount your lifelong activities, efforts and desires. Check yourself as to how far you are honouring the commitment you have made by declaring your belief and conviction in Allah. Are you true to Allah in the discharge of trusts and responsibilities or flouting the trust? What proportion of your time, efforts, ability and property is devoted to the cause of Allah and what is reserved for other activities. Compare the degree of your annoyance, grief and uneasiness when your own personal interests and passions are hit, as against your feelings and reaction when Allah's authority and commandments are flouted. You can thus test your attachment with Allah in so many ways and find out daily whether your attachment with Allah is on the

increase or decrease. Do not bother about the *sufic* technicalities of *Basharat* (glad tidings), *Karamat* (excellence), *Kashf* (inspiration) and *Tajalliat* (divine lights). In fact there is no awareness (*Kashf*) greater than the awareness of the oneness of Allah in this world of deceptions and fallacies. No excellence (*Karamat*) is higher than to stand with determination in the face of apprehensions created and temptations offered by Satan and his followers. There is no better perception of Allah's lights than to witness the truth in the groping darkness of infidelity (*Kufr*), impiety (*Fisq*) and perdition (*Dalalat*) all around. The greatest possible *Basharat* (glad tidings) that a believer may get is through his staunch belief in Allah and steadfastness in His way.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا — كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

"Surely those who said that Allah is our Lord and then they stuck to this declaration, Allah sends His angels to them who say "Do not be afraid, nor be grieved, but be delighted to hear the happy news of being awarded the Paradise as promised to you." (41 : 30)

Preference of the *Aākhirah* (Hereafter) :

My second advice to you after *Taalluq Billah* is to give preference to Hereafter over this

world, in each and every matter. In every affair of this life, your aim should be to attain success and blessing in the life hereafter. Quran tells us that our eternal abode is the hereafter ; we are in this world only temporarily, to be examined as to who of us are going to prove their competency of winning the eternal life of Paradise, by acting properly within the limits imposed by Allah—of course within the limits of our resources, our authority, time stipulated to us, and opportunities afforded by Him. We are here being tested not for our achievements in industry, commerce, agriculture or statecraft, nor for the fine buildings and roads we construct, nor even for the extent of our success in establishing a grand culture. But the real test pertains to the extent of our ability to perform our duties as Allah's vicegerent in respect of the trusts placed in us, and whether we lead our life as an outlaw and a rebel or as an obedient and law-abiding person ? Whether we comply with the will of Allah on His earth or the will of our own self or of other claimants to godship other than Allah ? Whether we are trying to adorn and administer Allah's world according to His standard or trying to corrupt and damage it ? And whether we struggle and fight the Satanic forces for the sake of Allah or meekly lay down

our arms and surrender to those forces ? The first test of Adam and Eve in the Paradise was just the same. Hence all persons selected for the eternal inhabitation of Paradise from the entire humanity shall have to pass this test. Hence the true criterion for success or failure is irrelevant with the examination seat, be it a monarch's throne or a condemnation cell, a large empire or a poor man's hut. These temporary phases of success or failure in the mortal life are no proof of success or failure in the life hereafter. The true success, on which we should concentrate depends on unflinching loyalty to Allah and complete submission to His commands, irrespective of the field of our activities and the responsibilities assigned to us. Thus alone can we ensure the position reserved by Allah for His loyal servants.

GENTLEMEN ! This is the reality. It is not enough to understand or accept it only once— but great effort is needed to refresh it time and again. Otherwise, there is always a possibility that, in spite of the fact of our not being a non-believer in the hereafter, we might step into the shoes of those who work for worldly gains forgetting the hereafter. This happens because the hereafter is imperceptible and visible only after

death. The good or bad end in the hereafter can only be perceived through intellect. On the contrary, this world is an easily perceptible thing, offering its sweet and sour tastes every now and then, and its achievements and failures are always there to deceive us as the ultimate consequences. The loss in the life hereafter may only give us a little pricking in our conscience if it at all exists. Whereas the loss of this world is felt by us physically. Our family, our relatives, acquaintances, friends and the people in general all not only feel it but also make it felt. Similarly the accomplishment of the hereafter provides a little comfort and satisfaction to the conscience only if heedlessness has not deadend it. But the prosperity in this world serves as a pleasure for our whole body. We feel it with all our senses and every one around us shares this feeling. Hence it is really very difficult to translate the faith in hereafter into practice and base the whole concept and working of day to day life upon this faith, although it may not look so difficult to accept it as a faith and belief. It might be very easy to say that world is a trifle, but to face and reject the worldly attractions and refuse to concede to the worldly desires is not at all an easy job. It can only be possible after

a great struggle and can be retained with persistent labour.

Means to Develop Concern for Hereafter

You might ask me as to what is the method to acquire this quality and what are its requirements ? I would say you can get it by two methods, reflective and practical. The reflective method is that be not contented with the pronouncement of your belief in Hereafter but make it a habit to study Quran fully grasping its spirit and meanings. This method of studying Quran will gradually develop such a conviction in hereafter as if you have seen it with your own eyes. There is not perhaps a single page in the Quran where the hereafter is not mentioned in one way or the other. At places you will find the hereafter portrayed in such a detail as if an eye witness account is being reported. At many places in the Quran, life in hereafter is projected in such an exquisite manner that the reader feels himself present as an observer. Only if the camouflage of this world is removed one can witness with his own eyes whatever is being narrated in the Holy Quran. Hence continuous study of the Quran with full comprehension can gradually raise one to a position where the con-

cern for the hereafter gets complete hold of his mind, and he begins to feel actually at all times that he is to prepare himself in this temporary worldly life for his permanent abode of life after death.

This approach gets stronger by the study of traditions of the Holy Prophet wherein details about life after death are often described just like eye-witness accounts. This reminds us of the fact how the conviction and firm belief in the hereafter dominated the lives of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) and his companions.

This conviction in *Aākhirah* is further strengthened by visits to graveyards which should be made solely with the purpose of remembering ones own end as advised by the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him). One should never forget in the urges and desires of this worldly life the same fate and end which the others are facing day and night before him. But mind it that those tombs and shrines would not serve the purpose, which the wayward people have turned into centres for fulfilment of their worldly desires and relief from the hardships of life. Instead you should visit the graveyards of the common men or the grand mausoleums of monarchs deprived of the pomp and show of body-

guards and aide de-camps to make the people observe the formalities in the presence of such monarchs.

Now let us take the practical method. While living in this world and taking part in the affairs of your community, friends, acquaintances, your city, country or in the matters of your profession or finances you often find yourself at the cross-roads. Faith and conviction in the life hereafter calls you towards that way while material gains and interests press you to go the other way. Try your level best to proceed on the way mentioned first. If you have chosen the other way because of any weakness or unawareness retrace your steps as soon as you realise the mistake, unmindful of how far have you gone the wrong way. Look unto yourself and try to find out how often did the worldly interests and attractions succeed in getting you absorbed in it and how many times did you succeed in avoiding detraction from the right path, and consideration for the life hereinafter dominated over you. This assessment of your own self shall tell you exactly how much your concern for the life hereinafter has increased and to what extent are you required to make up the deficency. Whatever the deficiency, try hard to make it up through

your own efforts. Outside help can only be acquired by keeping away from the society of materialists and by developing friendship with the pious who prefer the gains of the life hereinafter over this world. But remember, there is no way yet known to develop or discard any quality in you without your own efforts or potentials.

Avoid Vanity

My third advice to you is that you should not feel proud of the improvements you have made in your person and in your collective morality. You should not, individually or as a party, fall into the fallacy that you have achieved perfection, that you have reached your goal and that there is no room for any further improvement in your practical life or any more target to be achieved. Often I and the other officials of the party came face to face with a teasing problem. Many a people have been trying to belittle the position of the Jamaāt-e-Islami and, in fact, of the Islamic Movement, which is real purpose of the Jamāat. They label it as a political party working for the same end as the other political organisations. Piety and purity as well as spiritualism is no where traceable in it. It utterly lacks attachment with Allah

(*Taālluq Billah*) and concern for hereinafter (*Aākhirah*) ; its leadership has no link with any school of sufism and have got no grooming, in any sufic centre of piety and excellence in spiritualism. Hence there is no chance for its associates to get such grooming. The idea behind this campaign to spread dissatisfaction among the workers of the Jamāat so that they might recapitulate to the same old religious centres that consider any partial service to Islam under the over all patronage of *Kufr* as a great achievement and those who can never even imagine to establish Islam as a complete and perfect code of life. They have labelled every such attempt as an anti religious move with all the eloquence at their command. They have always opposed any move to establish Islam as a dominant force in the Muslim society against infidelity (*Kufr*) and impiety (*Fisq*) by painting all such attempts as purely mundane and motivated by material ambitions and worldly gains.

This is why we are strained to explain the real difference between the concept of piety put forward by the sufic spiritualism and the concept of Islamic piety and purity. We have to explain what is real *Taqwa* (fear of Allah) and *Ehsan*

(excellence in submission to Allah) as desired in Islam and how it differs with the *Taqwa* and *Ehsan* which is taught by the so called authorities on piety and religiosity. Side by side with it we have also to explain in detail the technique and methods of reform and grooming adopted by the Islamic movement and its consequences, so that anybody sincere to Islam and having a correct and unadulterated concept of Islamic order may easily know that once convinced and impressed by the revolutionary message of Islam one automatically undergoes a great change in his outlook and concepts. This conviction develops true piety, fear of Allah and excellence in submission to His Will. Such a sort of sincerity and conviction is altogether missing in the stereotype sufic methods of training in piety and excellence not only in the trainees but in their teachers and guides as well.

We have to say all this because of the unjust and unfair attitude of our critics. We do not mean to defend ourselves, but we feel this explanation necessary in the interest of the Islamic Movement. We seek the protection of Allah against any vanity or pride about our own selves by the above exposition or any misconception that we have perfected ourselves. God

forbid, such a misconception and deceitful pride may deprive us of all that we have acquired so far.

To avoid this mishap I would like you to fully understand the following three points and never forget them :

My first point is that perfection knows no limits and its point of excellence is out of our sight. You go on climbing up and never consider any point as the highest one. In fact you are never perfect. The moment one considers himself perfect, his strife for the better and consequently his development stops, and decline begins. Never forget that a continuous struggle is needed for not only reaching a height but also for keeping yourself there. The moment you stop striving upward the downward pull starts working. The wise never look down to assess their achievement but look up to know how much is left unattained, and how far is their target.

My next point is that the standard of humanity set by Islam is so high that it starts from where the other isms and theologies conclude their excellence and perfection. It is not at all any utopic ideal. It reflects in the practical life of the Holy Prophets as well as in the lives of the devoted companions of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) and the pious among the

Ummah. Always keep that standard in mind. It will save you from misapprehension of having attained perfection, make you realise your own lowliness and always present before you new heights to achieve. Even after a lifelong struggle you will feel that many a heights are yet unattained. Never feel proud of your health while patients around you are breathing their last. every moment. Look at the monuments of morality and piety of the past, whom you are replacing in the fight against evil. Faithful is he who always keeps in mind those who are richer in Islamic knowledge and deeds so that the thirst for accumulating this wealth does not die out. As regards material wealth, he always compares, himself with the poorer and thanks Allah for what He has given him, satisfying his thirst with whatever he has got [1]

My third point is that the qualities actually

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1. The Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) has said, 'Whosoever looked to the higher than himself in case of his *Deen* and followed his footsteps, and looked to the lower than himself in gains and thanked Allah for what He has given to him got himself recorded with Allah as contented and grateful. On the contrary, one who looked at the lower for his *Deen* and at the higher for his worldly gains and felt grief and regret for lacking in worldly gains would be recorded neither contented nor grateful.

acquired by us so far appear impressive only because deterioration has debased us a lot. The little light provided in the pitch darkness has earned prominence, otherwise it is a fact that we lack a lot in our personal lives when we assess ourselves on the criterion and the minimum requirements of faith in Islam. Hence confession of our shortcomings should not be a formality. It must result in a thorough purging of all of our faults and vices that we find and locate in our own personal life. We are introducing a new programme to assist you in this grooming and reform of your own self.

Utilise Training Camps

This training and grooming is open for all. The period of this course is very short to facilitate the businessmen, the agriculturists and the employees to benefit from it easily. The training is two-fold, academical and practical. The aim of the academical part is to provide minimum basic knowledge of Quran, Hadith and Fiqah, alongwith some important portions from our literature. This would enable one to understand Islam, its entire system, its requirements, the way of leading Islamic life and the process of establishing Islamic order. He would also know the nature of indi-

vidual character and collective behaviour as required for the struggle to establish Islamic order.

The practical part of the training programme undertakes to provide the workers an opportunity to live together, in a clean, chaste, Islamic way for a few days to learn punctuality, discipline, good companionship, fraternity and love, to try to imbibe good qualities of others and overcome their shortcomings with the help of others. They must avail of this opportunity to concentrate their mind, attention and activities exclusively for the pleasure of Allah, getting rid of all their worldly engagements for a few days at least.

We wanted to establish such training camps almost in every district, on a permanent footing. But we lack in suitable personnel capable of running these training camps as well as in adequate resources. Hence short courses have been arranged for the time being at Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan and Karachi. Anyhow I hope that you would benefit a lot with this meagre arrangement. Allah willing, going through this course, you will yourselves be convinced of its utility. I appeal to all my friends to utilize this programme fully.

Attend to your kith and kin

I would also advise you to pay special attention towards reforming your kith and kin. Quran says :

قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَاراً

"save yourselves and your kith and kin from Fire"

You are very much particular about the food and clothing of your families. But you should be much more particular to save them from the attrition of Hell. Try your best for the betterment of their life hereinafter and put them on the way to Paradise. If any one of them goes astray, in spite of your efforts, you shall not be held responsible for it. The point is that you should in no way be involved in his failure in the Hereafter. I often receive complaints that my party men do not pay so much attention to the betterment and reform of their own family as they do for the betterment of others. These complaints may be true in some cases, and may be exaggerated in some other cases. It is not possible for me to investigate the case of every individual. So I give a word of general advice. All of us should not only have a longing and desire but sincerely strive to see our near and dear ones on the path to peace and salvation to get real consolation.